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AN OLD SHROPSHIRE OAK

VOL. III.

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AN OLD SHROPSHIRE OAK

BY THE LATE

JOHN WOOD WARTER

AUTHOR OF 'THE SEABOARD AND THE DOWN'
ETC.

EDITED BY RICHARD GARNETT, LL.D.

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AN OLD SHROPSHIRE OAK.

Ὑπ' αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς περικαλλέϊ φηγῷ.

Iliad, E' 693.

The air that floated by me seemed to say,
'Write! thou wilt never have a better day.'
And so I did.

KEATS'S *Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke*, Sept. 1816.

Pleraque eorum quæ retuli, quæque referam, parva forsitan et levia memoratu videri, non nescius sum.

TACIT. *Annal.* iv. c. 32.

Thus I entertain
The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things,
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.

WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*, p. 92.

Gravestones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks.

SIR T. BROWNE'S *Hydriotaphia, or Urn-burial*, c. v. vol. iii. 491. Ed. Wilkins.

A tree on which the host of dreams
Low murmur mystic things.

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON'S *Poems; Love's Sudden Growth*, p. 135.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE REFORMATION UNDER HENRY VIII.

Bonus sermo secreta non quærit.
ST. HIERON. *Ep.* cxxviii. Tom. i. 958 B.

Sanguis Christi clavis Paradisi est, dicentis ad latronem, *Hodie mecum eris in Paradiso.*
Ibid. cxxix. *ad Dardan.* i. 962 B.

And let the souldiers of Satan, and superstitious Mawmetrie, haste, and cry out with the Heathen Poet:

Excessere omnes, adytis templisque relictis,
Di, quibus imperium hoc steterat.—*Æn.* ii. 351.
LAMBARDE'S *Perambulation of Kent*, p. 296.

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the shew appear;
That love is merchandized, whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*, cii.

Yet, if men moved him, was he such a storm
As oft 'twixt May and April is to see
When winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be.
SHAKESPEARE'S *Lover's Complaint.*

IT was stated at the end of the foregoing chapters, and an instance given to the point, that in Henry VII.'s days bishops were men of diffusive charity, and no doubt there were many good bishops then with holy views and enlarged hearts; but it must be confessed that the state of the Church in these realms was by no means encouraging, and a great darkness brooded over the people generally. And much of this, as it is well known, old Latimer, in his racy sermons, which can never be out of date, laid to the charge of the superstitious vanities of the Romish Church, and to the *unpreaching* prelates.

In his 'Sermon of the Plough,' which was preached in the shrouds of St. Paul's, there are many allusions to the neglect of preaching, owing to bishops being employed as ambassadors, and presidents, and comptrollers of the mint; and, he adds, in his own peculiar way: 'Well, well, is this their duty? Is this their office? Is this their calling? Should we have ministers of the Church to be comptrollers of the mints? Is this a meet office for a priest that hath cure of souls? Is this his charge? I would here ask one question—I would fain know who controlleth the devil at home in his parish, while he controlleth the mint?' After which, within a page or two, occurs this striking passage:

'And now I would ask a strange question: Who is the most diligentest bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the others, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you; it is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all others; he is never out of his diocese; he is never from his cure; ye shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish; he keepeth residence at all times; ye shall never find him out of the way—call for him when you will he is ever at home; the diligentest preacher in all the realm; he is ever at his plough; no lending nor loitering ever hinder him; he is ever applying his business, ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kind of popery. He is ready as can be wished to set forth his plough; to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory. Where the devil is resident, and hath his plough going, then away with books and up with candles; away with Bibles and up with beads; away with the light of the gospel and up with the light of candles, yea, at noon-days. Where the devil is resident, that he may prevail, up with superstition and idolatry, censing, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new services of men's inventing; as though men could invent a better way to honour God's

will than God Himself hath appointed. Down with Christ's cross, up with purgatory pick-purse, up with him, the popish purgatory, I mean. Away with clothing the naked, the poor, and impotent; up with decking of images, and gay garnishing of stocks and stones; up with man's traditions and his laws, down with God's traditions and His Most Holy Word. Down with the old honour due to God, and up with the new god's honour. Let all things be done in Latin: not so much as, *Memento, homo, quod cinis es, et in cinerem reverteris*: "Remember, man, that thou art ashes, and unto ashes shalt thou return!"—which be the words that the minister speaketh unto the ignorant people, when he giveth them ashes upon Ash Wednesday—but it must be spoken in Latin; God's Word may in no wise be translated into English. Oh that our prelates would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine as Satan is to sow cockle and darnel!' *Ibid. p.* 65.

It was about this time that many confidences took place between the rector of Hanwood, for the time being, and one of the rectors of Pontesbury. Their names I do not call to mind; I only know that the rector of Hanwood, now alluded to, preceded John Hogg who was there in 1534–5. Whether the rector of Pontesbury referred to belonged to the Decanal or David portion, to Nicholas or Child's Hall, or to Cold Hall or Ratford portion, I am equally unable to say.

These two worthies, as I collected from my Talking Friend, did not altogether think alike; but they were active and zealous men, to whom might be applied the words of Malachi: *Then they that found the Lord spake often one to another.* Indeed, because of the local illustration, I can never forget the way in which the Old Oak put the matter pleasantly, and with a great rustling of his leaves. They had been together, he said, to Polmere, 'which lies between the Lea and Newnham, to hear the drumming of the bittern, and to watch the flight of the pewits; and as they sat beneath his shade on their return he heard them say, referring to the reeds and rushes of the pond, whence the people generally gathered their wicks, that the rushlight Wiclif had set up, even in the dwellings of the poor, would, by-and-by, shine

brighter than the biggest candle of the Romanists, though as great as an oak.'

The good men would have liked to have heard old Latimer again in his second 'Sermon of the Card' deliver the sentence following: 'I promise you, if you build a hundred churches, give as much as you can make to the gilding of saints and the honouring of the church, and if thou go as many pilgrimages as thy body can well suffer, *and offer as great candles as oaks*, if thou leave the work of mercy and the Commandments undone, these works shall nothing avail thee.'

There can be no doubt whatever but that there were many of the clergy of England who at this time were Protestants at heart long before the celebrated Protest of the six Lutheran Princes, April 17, 1530, in opposition to the Emperor Charles V.'s Diet at Spires in 1529. The leaven of Wiclif and other good men had been at work now for long, and the Bread of Life, which is the Gospel, or Christ in His Holy Gospel, was to be freely and liberally distributed, and His war openly declared, or sometimes more secretly in many parishes of the land, like Hanwood and Pontesbury. Indeed, it was in quiet, out-of-the-way places, that the good seed kept growing secretly, and there it was found *after many days*. With what faith and trust must Wiclif have translated the words as he hopefully looked onwards: *So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.*

And at this time, when Henry VIII. came to the throne, the seed was sprouting forth, and many that were called Papists were only so by name, and ignorantly. Thus far were they from denying the only Foundation, which is Christ. Even Calvin admitted this, and so did that great and good man Philip du Plessis Mornay—instances specially alleged by the learned and judicious Hooker in his learned Discourses on Habakkuk, i. 4, who had before observed so charitably and so well: 'For mine own part I dare not hereupon deny the possibility of their salvation, which have been the chiefest

instrument of ours, albeit they carried to their grave a persuasion so greatly repugnant to the truth. Forasmuch, therefore, as it may be said of the Church of Rome she hath yet a little strength, she doth not directly deny the foundation of Christianity, I may, I trust without offence, persuade myself that thousands of our fathers in former times, living and dying within her walls, have found mercy at the hands of God.'

Only imagine the consternation of my Talking Friend if anyone in his presence had condemned everlastingly the many priests of Hanwood he had known, and his time-honoured father had known, previous to the Reformation. Probably, indeed, they and those like to them, holy in their life and conversation, though they lived under the papacy, were the very salt that saved the mass from putrefaction. So, certainly, was it with the two rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury above alluded to,

> Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's pence,
> And number'd bead, and shrift,
> Bluff Harry broke into the spence
> And turned the cowls adrift.

The fact is that these two good men, and this very time, were looking for those *times of refreshing* which, within a period of a few short years, were about to comfort the nation and the people—though accompanied with deaths oft, and a girdle of fire, and much accompanying wickedness. But, taken in its largest and fullest sense, it is ever true, and ever will be true, that *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

Meanwhile Henry VIII. ascends the throne, of whom Stow thus speaks: 'Of person he was tall and mighty; in wit and memory excellent; of such majestie and humanity as was comely in such a prince.' 'A good Latinist, philosopher, divine, and musician'—says Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury in his well-known Life—'had his age answered his youth or expectation, none of his predecessors could have exceeded him; but as his exquisite endowments of nature engaged him often to become a prey of those allurements and temptations which are ordinarily incidental to them, so

his courage was observed, by little and little, to receive into it some mixtures of self-will and cruelty.'

The reign of this celebrated monarch, who, like Richard III., has in modern days had staunch defenders, was from circumstances one of the greatest consequence to England; and, worthless as Henry was as a man, as a king he holds no small niche in the Temple of Fame. So true is it tha great men are not always good men! And if he, with all the arrogance of a Tudor, could make his boast that he 'never spared a woman in his lust or a man in his anger,' it is at least satisfactory to the historian of the Shropshire Oak to say, in the Oak's own words: 'Although, one way or another, we may have suffered by him, yet neither the banks of the Rea nor the wanderings of the Severn, which almost encircled the Old Town, were contaminated by his presence;' to which remark he added, 'You will very well recollect how our townsman Thomas Churchyard, in the voice of a cardinal, and in a curious discourse, told of Wolsey's rise into great authority and government; his manner of life, pomp, and dignity; and how he fell down into great disgrace, and was accused of high treason.' And, true enough, I remembered all this right well; and although I thought the cardinal a man of great political ability, yet of him, too, as of his master, I did not think well; nor could I have said of him, in Milton's words, when he fell:

> O Teacher! some great mischief hath befallen
> To that meek man, who well had sacrificed;
> Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?

In passing onwards—having here introduced that great name out of its proper date by some short years—I must still stop to add that when arrested at Cawood by the Earl of Northumberland, he would still speak of the Old Town—so dear to my Talking Friend—for when Sir Walter Walche 'entered my lorde his chamber and began to pluck off his hoode,' he vowed that it was made of the same 'cloathe whereof his coate was, which was of *Shrewsbury cotton*, to the intent that he should not be knownne.' I suppose *Shrewsbury cotton* in this passage to mean *flannel*; just as the

French of Stratford atte Bowe, in Chaucer, as put into the mouth of the narrator, simply means English—a colloquial phrase of the day, as Sir N. Harris Nicolas explains it—

> And *Frenche she spake* ful fayre and fetisly,
> *After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,*
> For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.

As I have often hinted, my Talking Friend's knowledge was chiefly local; and hence, of Henry's early war with France; of the Battle of the Spurs; of the taking of Tournay; and even of Flodden Field—where James IV. of Scotland fell, September 9, 1513—my Friend apparently knew nothing; and what is stranger still, he never, as far as I can recollect, once alluded to the celebrated 'Field of the Cloth of Gold,' where Henry and Francis I. met in such splendour, June 1520. Very probably, indeed, he had never heard of Francis I., or of the intrigues between Charles V. of Spain and Wolsey. Such crooked counsels, and such stormy matters had not reached the quiet banks of the Rea; and I thought of Anselm's lines:

> Aerias Alpes nivibus candescere scimus,
> Frigoribusque premi, perpetuoque gelu:
> Illic et rabies ventorum plurima sævit,
> Temperiem gratam proxima vallis habet.

Somewhere about this time my Talking Friend spoke of a great meeting at St. Mary's in Shrewsbury, at which all the quality of the Vale, and many of the common people, assisted. It seems to have been a general holiday, for the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury attended it, and marshalled their flocks. Stow chronicles: 'Lady Mary, King Henry's daughter, was borne at Greenewich on the 11th of February, *Anno* 1516,' and the extract which follows from Archdeacon Owen clearly identifies it:

'Before the restoration of the Abbey by Earl Roger de Montgomery, St. Mary's was accounted the chief church of the town, and even until the dissolution it seems to have possessed precedence as a Royal Chapel, for we find that in 1516 a solemn thanksgiving was ordered to be held in it for the birth of the Princess Mary to Henry VIII. and

his Queen Catherine, at which all the choirs of the town were commanded to assist, and the bailiffs and corporation attended.'

It was upon this occasion, my Talking Friend said, that Edred Ferrington made a great disturbance on his way home from Shrewsbury through Hanwood and Cruck Meole to Shorthill. He constantly passed this way with his leopard's head as a protecting badge, claiming his rights as a Shrewsbury beggar, but never before had his conduct been so reprehensible. The consequence was that he was severely reprimanded, and threatened with the loss of the leopard.

From what I picked up from the good Old Oak there seems to have been much sickness about this time, though it took no specific form. It appears to have lasted from autumn through the winter. In London it took the form of the sweating sickness, before described, but not in this neighbourhood. Stow thus mentions it, *Anno* 1517–1518: 'About the Feast of Lammas' (i.e. August 1) 'began the sweating sickness, of the which many men died suddenly in the beginning thereof, and this plague continued till Michaelmas. Many died thereof in the Court, as the Lord Clinton, the Lord Grey of Wilton, and many other knights and gentlemen, by reason of which contagious sickness Michaelmas term was adjourned. After this, to wit in the winter, was a great death of pestilence, almost over all England, in every town, more or less.' It was to this, clearly, that my Talking Friend referred, and it fell heaviest in this district after the *Wakes*. So true is it

> That when men think they most in safety stand,
> Their greatest peril often is at hand.

It must have been not far off from this time that one William Williams, a Welshman, was taken ill under the Old Oak. He was well-known on the road, and was on his return from Shrewsbury to Marton Pool, where he was in the habit of decoying the swans which in those days resorted there in great flight, especially before hard weather. One way or another he eked out a livelihood by fish and fowl, and was always in request before any great feast in the Old

Town. What had been going on at the present time I do not know, but there had been feast and festival, no doubt. The neighbours around were very kind to Williams, and he was taken in at the Old Homestead, and the rector of Hanwood was sent for to see him—medical men in those days not being so handy as they are now. It soon transpired that the wayfaring swan-taker had received what we now call a *turn*, for, as he was leaving Shrewsbury, he was horribly shocked and disgusted at seeing a man's head, whose features he seemed to recognise, fixed on the Welsh gate with his face towards Wales.

It was likely enough that Williams knew the face, for we pick up that it was that of Griffith ap I. ap David, otherwise Griffith Mikewyne, who is put down under the category of felon and rebel, but was more probably a poor fellow driven to madness by wrongs: one whom (say the historians of Shrewsbury) 'a more humane age would have consigned to a lunatic asylum.' Whether or not, the sight scared poor Williams sadly, and it was nine days or more ere he left his quarters on the Rea-side. He was a grateful as well as a feeling man, for not long after, he brought to his old friends at Cruck Meole, a bittern, two wild geese, a large pike, and two solitary snipes, one of which he had taken at the head and the other at the foot of Marton Pool in his cunningly set springes, the great engines of his art. He was said to have belonged to an old Welsh family, to have run wild, and to have taken to sport in his own way. Browne, perhaps, had some such an instance in his eye—

> Much like a lad, who in his tender prime
> Sent from his friends to learn the use of time:
> As are his mates, or good or bad, so he
> Shapes to the world, and such his actions be.

It would appear that in the autumn and winter months of 1526–7 the whole valley of the Rea was more or less under water, and the crops rotted in the ground. The deluge of rain appears to have been as general as the subsequent dearth, for old Stow tells us that 'in the months of November, December, and January fell such rain that the quantity thereof caused

great floods, which destroyed cornfields, pastures, and beasts: then was it dry till the twelfth of April, and from that time it rained every day and night till the third of June, whereby corn failed sore in the following year.' By referring to the old Shrewsbury accounts it will be seen how scarce grain was then, and no doubt what Stow records was painfully true: 'That such scarcity of bread was in London and all England, that many died for default thereof,' notwithstanding the wise precautions of the Government. In this valley, all the way from Caux Castle downwards to the entrance of the Rea by Coleham into the Severn, the rot amongst animals generally was never known to have been so destructive. One remarkable circumstance occurred which was a subject of conversation under the Old Oak: 'The eels were washed from their beds and floated down the stream with their white and yellow bellies upwards.' Once I recollect this to have been the case owing to the bilge-water pumped up from the Snailbeach Lead Mines. It likewise poisoned the trout, for which the little stream had always been so notorious.

As far as I could make out it must have been in the year 1527 or 1528 that the rector of Hanwood and his friend the rector of Pontesbury had been together to Shrewsbury on a visit to Richard Baker, then vicar of the Holy Cross—not to be confounded with the abbot of the same name, who resigned in 1529, 'was appointed prior of Morfield, survived the dissolution, and was buried at St. Leonard's, Bridgenorth, May 7, 1558, the last year of Queen Mary.' There was a pleasant intimacy between the vicar of the Holy Cross and these two country rectors. He detailed to them the news of the town, and they told him the news of the country.

They had been to what even then was called 'the town'—the old name for all county towns—and there it was they heard how a messenger had come from the king 'touching the books of Martin Luther.' As far as I could pick out from the reminiscences of my Talking Friend, they did not state what the message related to, nor have I been able to ascertain. But my Old Friend made a statement which showed that the rector of Hanwood knew more of what was going on in Germany than might have been anticipated. He had an

intimate friend, it appears, in the Steelyard in London, called Hans Dhiel, one of the merchants of Almaine—or, as we should now say, Germany—and he it was who told him all about the poor miner's son, and of the stand he was taking in his own country against prevalent corruptions.

And thus it came about on the present occasion that the two rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury began to converse on the matter, and being good and holy men they bethought them much of what they had seen round about them in their own country, encouraged to do so, no doubt, by Hans Dhiel, who usually made an annual visit to Ludlow and Shrewsbury. To Ludlow it is probable—as the Court of the Marches was there—he was led by his occupation as a merchant; his visit to Shrewsbury is not so apparent, unless it had something to do, as the old accounts speak, 'touching the order of wools,' which come under the same item with Luther's books. Whether this was so or not, whenever he came to Shrewsbury the chief part of his time was spent at Hanwood; and being a sportsman, although a Londoner, the woods round about were his delight, and no one more than he enjoyed catching the trout of the river Rea.

But it is equally evident that Hans Dhiel was a man of deep thought, and he constantly conversed with the rector of Hanwood on the many and great corruptions which had overspread, like the moss and lichen on the willow trees hard by, the pure Word of Faith, and the truth as it is in Jesus.

On one occasion when Hans Dhiel was in Shrewsbury he witnessed all sorts of profane and unhallowed mummeries, as he called them, from which we may infer, I think, that that visit must have been in the month of May; 'and he hoped,' he said, 'that the time would come when it would not be thought necessary to make game of the clergy and sacred things on the Wyle and on Mardol Cop, and to allow disbursements in the town accounts for painting and restoring the tattered ornaments of the abbot of Masham, Mayvoll, or, as he added slyly, *Mayfool*,' words which presently reminded me of a passage in the Historians of Shrewsbury, which I will transcribe. It is in an account of the minstrels, players, sports, and pastimes of the day.

'Least of all, in the account of the amusements of our forefathers, must we forget that important character the Lord Abbot of Masham, Masall, Mardol, or Mayvoll (for by all these names he is called): a personage, we presume, peculiarly Salopian, though a near relation, no doubt, of the Abbot of the Northumberland Household, the Abbot of Unreazon of the Scottish Court, and the Abbé de Loesse of Artois. How our ancestors, whose reverence for the offices and ministers of religion was extreme, should, at one season of the year, indulge in so ludicrous employment of one of its highest titles, may at first excite surprise; but there can be little doubt that the practice was borrowed from the Saturnalian festivities of ancient Rome, and was permitted for the same reason; and that, as then, the pressure of habitual servitude was lightened by the "annual liberty of December," so, in the dark ages, the prelates indulged their "subditi," or subjects, as the laity were called, with an occasional relaxation of the implicit veneration which they exacted during the remainder of the year. In the Eton *Montem*—till recently one of the most remarkable relics existing of the festive shows of a barbarous age—the *parson and clerk* made a conspicuous part of the procession.'

It was upon one of these visits that Hans Dhiel, the good Almaine merchant, told the rector of Hanwood many little incidents about Luther's childhood. Amongst other things, he recorded how, when a carrend—or, as we should speak, a chorister boy—he was received with much kindness into the house of the Cotta family at Eisenach, and how he never forgot it when he became the great doctor of Wittemberg, and the far-famed Reformer. It was in remembrance of a Christian woman of this family that he said, 'There is nothing sweeter on earth than the heart of a woman in which pity dwells,' which Chaucer would have put thus:

For pitie renneth sone in gentel herte.

She was a widow woman of this family that made a mantle for the child Luther, as report says, in the days of his poverty—and I could wish the critics had not tried to disprove it. The lovableness of the story transcends pretended

accuracy. Antiquarians last year (Mrs. Watson of Lancing told me) went to Lutterworth and *dis*proved the reality of Wiclif's table and candlesticks. I should like to have excommunicated them for their pains, with bell, book, and candle. I want to uphold nothing that is untrue; but there is something traitorous in breaking up the bonds of love and tender reminiscences. If one *were* false to me I had rather not hear another tell it. It is enough to move inwardly and to eat out one's own heart like the sorrowing and desolate one in the Greek story!

Ὃν θυμὸν κατέδων, πάτον ἀνθρώπων ἀλεείνων—

or, as Cicero translates it in the Third Book of the Tusculan Disputations,

> Qui miser in campis mœrens errabat Aleis
> Ipse suum cor edens, hominum vestigia vitans.

I did not pick up from my Talking Friend whether or not the rector of Hanwood said anything about Henry's book, written in 1521—the 'Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum,' etc., for which the royal author received from Leo X. the title of 'Defender of the Faith,' by a Bull dated October 11 that same year.

But, as I said before, greater were the events which resulted in the movement of Luther; and much as the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury rejoiced to think that true and vital religion was in the ascendant, the valley of the Rea was little concerned locally, and the private views of these men, in advance of the age and people amongst whom they dwelt, could be but little known. It does not follow, either, that they were too timid or too cautious in promulgating their own impressions, for the soil was hardly ready for the seed, and their Christian prudence and moderation did more, probably, for the furthering of the views of the Reformation than any violent outburst would have done. As to Henry's own views, nothing, most likely, was known about them in this retired vale, except what oozed out through the rector of Hanwood, coming either from his friend Hans Dhiel, or from the old town of Shrewsbury and his friends there. We have learned more about Henry VIII. now than the best informed did then;

and although he has his supporters we cannot give him credence for any great desire to further the interests of religion. Certainly, as late as 1524, he had no real breach with the papacy, for in that very year, as old Stow tells us, he received the Golden Rose. Here are the very words :

'The first of September, Dr. Tho. Haniball, Master of the Rols, was received into London as ambassador from Clement the VIIth, Pope, which brought with him a Rose of Golde for a token to the King, which was presented to him at Windsor. This tree was forged of fine golde, and wrought with branches, leaves, and flowers resembling Roses ; set in a potte of Gold, which potte had three feete of artistic fashion ; of measure halfe a pinte. In the uppermost Rose was a faire Sapphire loupe pearced the bigness of an Acorne. This tree was of height half an English yard, and in breadth a foote.'

Of all that was happening at this time, and for some years later, relative to Wolsey, Queen Catherine, and Anne Boleyn, very little reached the Rea-side. It is under the year 1528 that Stow introduces Henry's scruples about his first marriage, but they seem to have begun earlier, and he ceased to live with Catherine in 1524, though she resided in the Court till 1531. The notorious Court held at Black Friars, recently made use of in the novel by that name, was in 1529—two years, probably, after the king had first seen and danced forth Anne Boleyn—that unhappy, short-lived queen, who, if tempted by the magnificence of royalty, has had her character well defended from vulgar slanders. It is not credible that she ever was what her defamers would have made her out to be. All history is agreed to it, and her reported words to Sir William Kingston have much beauty and, no doubt, truth in them :

> Ye weep
> To see me smile—I smile to see you weep.
> I have no tears ; I have been reading over
> His agony that suffered on the Cross
> For such poor sinners as myself, and thee.
> Mine eyes spent all their moisture.

But, after all, it is not Anne Boleyn that interests us so much as Catherine of Arragon ; and the scene at Kimbolton

in 'Henry VIII.' is, as Johnson said, above any scene in any other part, tender and pathetic. 'Well did she deserve to be strewed over with maiden flowers; for, although "unqueened," never did any in the midst of her misfortunes shew herself "liker to a queen."' It is quite recently that there has been published a striking letter of Catherine's—'brave old Kate,' as the monks called her—from her death-bed to Henry, which he is said to have perused with tears; for she had gone 'a-Maying in Greenwich Park, and had fought Flodden in his absence, and had chastised Wolsey with her scorn.'

The death of Wolsey, November 29, 1530, disturbed neither the shallows nor the deep pools of the Rea; but, all this time, the good rectors so often referred to consulted together about what they heard periodically when in Shrewsbury. It was quite clear to them that great changes were likely to take place, and if the prosperity of the Old Town was not so great as formerly—which seems to be the case—light was dawning upon the people, nevertheless, and a decided religious improvement was taking place.

And I bethought me that great must have been the change in the chancellor of the day from Wolsey to Sir Thomas More—that eminently great and good man (notwithstanding his prejudices and sometime bigotry) whom all ages since, even the most zealous Reformers and anti-Romanists have agreed to honour—as great as the contrast between Wolsey and Cranmer, who had now come into notice on the matters of the Divorce; for he it was, who, when Wolsey and Campeggio could not be brought to decide in favour of it, advised that application should be made to the learned in the different universities of Europe as to whether the 'Laws of God allowed a man to marry his brother's widow.' Much has been said about the melancholy dilemma of the Divorce, but, weighing all the evidence together, it is most probable that Cranmer untied the knot. His meeting with Gardiner, then the king's secretary, and Fox the royal almoner, must have been a striking one. It took place at the house of a Mr. Cressy, near Waltham; but, as nothing of this reached the vale of Hanwood and the banks of the Rea it must be

left to the historian of the time: Collier says that 'time spoils the story,' and there is a difficulty in the date, but, as Le Bas observes, 'it does not spoil the story of his being the first to recommend the king to rely on the judgment of the Universities as a sufficient ground for a *definitive sentence* without any further resort to the authority of Rome.' Accordingly, Henry sent for Cranmer, saying, in his own well-known form of speech, which has descended to our times: 'Where is this Doctor Cranmer? I perceive he hath the right sow by the ear.'

And thus is Cranmer introduced to our notice: a great and a good man under any circumstances—one who, when he was weak, then became strong. I can have little in common with those who would detract from his fair fame. For if he was sometimes mistaken, his intents were right, and he acted in the main

> As if plain courses were the safest thing,
> Where upright goodness sure and steadfast goes;
> Free from that subtle masked impiety
> Which this depraved world calls Policy.

Some thirty years ago it was thought a mark of advanced penetration to question this thoughtful prelate's sincerity, and in many companies it was a favourite topic—but I thought then as I do now: whenever any religious ceremony is going on, the true Christian rule is 'Conform, or enter not'; or, in the old and beautiful language of the Bible: *Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* And it is to the purpose what a recent traveller in Lower and Upper Egypt says: 'At all the mosques at Cairo, which are now used for prayer, it is necessary to submit to put on slippers at the entrance, or have the feet covered with cloth. The Moslems always take off their shoes when there are people praying, and every right-minded visitor, whatever may be his creed, will be careful not to offend their feelings.'

And so, at last better impressed, determined oppositionists, of whom not a few fell back to Rome, were contented to let the martyr alone. And I bethought me how old Fuller said in 'The True Penitent': 'The Pope pretendeth to be the only

successor of St. Peter, but in this respect we are all his successors—we all have followed him, we have all sate in his chair, we all have denied our Master.'

As his name is before us, we are none of us to forget the many labours of love that Cranmer undertook, and his great desire to further the Reformation. None can read the history of these times without being aware of it, and to the history the reader is referred. But it must be remarked here that although the first printed Bibles in our language were those translated by W. Tindal, assisted by Miles Coverdale, and put forth abroad in 1526, and again 1532, 1535, 1537, with the assistance of John Rogers, the first martyr under Queen Mary—dedicated to Henry VIII. under the borrowed name of Thomas Matthews, whence called Matthews' Bible—yet it was the same Bible which Cranmer managed to get printed in England, and to have, under Cromwell's injunction, publicly set up in all churches, hence called Cranmer's or the Great Bible. For much information on this head the reader should consult the late Dr. Cardwell's Preface to Taverner's 'Postils,' where, if some dates may be questioned, he will find a great deal of matter usefully and briefly thrown together. Meanwhile, as all this is drawing us from local history, I will insert the Sonnet of Wordsworth on the

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

But, to outweigh all harm, the Sacred Book,
In dusty sequestration wrapt too long,
Assumes the accents of our native tongue:
And he who guides the plough, or wields the crook,
With understanding spirit now may look
Upon her records, listen to her song,
And sift her laws—much wondering that the wrong
Which Faith has suffered Heaven could calmly brook.
Transcendent boon! noblest that earthly king
Ever bestowed to equalise and bless
Under the weight of mortal wretchedness!
But passions spread like plagues, and thousands wild
With bigotry shall tread the Offering
Beneath their feet detested and defiled.

I questioned my Talking Friend as to whether he ever heard of a Bible being at this time chained up in the church

for the people to read. He told me that he had not, and that he did not think that on the present occasion Cranmer's Bible reached either Hanwood or Pontesbury, as the rectors (his friends), both favourers of the Reformation, only mentioned it as in the church at Shrewsbury—specially in St. Mary's and at St. Chad's, where they had friends. Evidently, for some years, the Abbey Parlour was not so open as it had been.

Agnovit longe gemitum præsaga mali mens.

Not, however, that the doors were closed, for at this time the Council of the king in the marches of Wales, when in Shrewsbury, were usually entertained at the Abbey, and it was at one of these great feasts—or *gaudys*, as they began to be called—that the rector of Hanwood first heard the report of Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn, on which occasion he took with him a wonderful flask of trout, and two styches of the most silvery eels that were ever taken in the Meole Brook! My Talking Friend well recollected the fact, because it did not escape the old rector's notice that many of the courtiers ate their score of oysters like the old Romans used to eat their olives, before they commenced their heavier repast, and the good old man contrasted the dull colours of the oysters with the bright spots of the trout out of the Rea, and wondered that, when away from London, they could eat such things.

All this is verified by the town accounts still in existence, where in one entry under 1532–3 there is a charge 30*s.* 8*d.* for the purchase of a 'large and a long boar, two swans, conies, and other gifts,' and under 1537 one of 2*s.* 4*d.* for seven hundred 'de oystres,' given to the Lord President. Thus have oysters been always a luxury, and, as for the boar, he continued as he was heretofore, when Juvenal satirised the 'luxuriæ sordes' of his day, saying in his caustic way,

Quanta est gula, quæ sibi totos
Ponit apros, animal propter convivia natum?

The rector of Hanwood very well recollected the two well-known burgesses of Shrewsbury—Robert Dudley and Adam Milton by name—starting for London to attend that Parlia-

ment which annihilated the Papal power in England. This was in 1534, 25 Hen. VIII. c. 21. It at once stopped the necessity of going to Rome for dispensation, and the law of the land was no longer to be crippled by law from beyond the Tiber.

As regards Henry himself, his secession from the Church of Rome is constantly alluded to in works on this subject; but it was rather a denial of its supremacy, for Henry, in his own realm, acknowledged none to be supreme but himself, as we know from the dire offence supposed to be taken at the words of Wolsey, which were, it is most likely, rather put into his mouth than expressed, for he better knew his royal master than to say too openly, EGO ET REX MEUS.

The Formularies of Faith put forth by authority during the reign of Henry VIII. viz. 'Articles about Religion,' 1536; 'The Institution of a Christian Man,' 1537; and 'A Necessary Doctrine of Erudition for any Christian Man,' 1543, are an attestation of what is above said relative to the Reformation; for although (to use the words of Bishop Lloyd in his Preface to these Formularies, immediately after writing which he died) 'it is in these works that we may trace the last departure of that darkness which had so long obscured the genuine form of Christianity, and may hail the reappearance of the pure light of the Gospel and mark the first dawning of a brighter day,' yet when the positive doctrines of the Papacy were immediately concerned 'the free expression' of Cranmer's 'sentiments was impeded and overruled.' Very different was his free tone in the first volume of the Homilies, in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England which he superintended so wisely and so well.

It is with reference to the early works here alluded to that Churton says in his 'Life of Alexander Nowel': 'In our own country, next to the renunciation of the Papal Supremacy, and the translation of the Holy Scriptures into English, the "Institution of a Christian Man," and Henry VIII.'s Primer, containing the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and Ten Commandments in English, with a strict injunction to all schoolmasters to use and teach the same, were the main steps which pre-

pared the way for a fuller Reformation in the days of the sixth Edward.' To which may be added from Knight's 'Life of Dean Colet': 'I know not whether it has been observed that the system of religion in the beginning of the Reformation, drawn up by the Convocation, and approved by Henry VIII., was called the "Institution of a Christian Man," from the title given of old to any little abridgement of the principles of Christian religion, particularly to that done by Erasmus'—*i.e.* for the noble school of St. Paul's, over which, out of a provident prescience, Dean Colet made the Mercers the overseers. 'For my own part,' says Fuller, 'I behold Colet's act herein not only prudential but something prophetical, as foreseeing the ruin of Church lands, and fearing that this his school, if made an ecclesiastical appendant, might in the fall of Church lands get a bruise, if not lose a limb thereby.'

Somewhere about this time there was a great concourse of nobility, or, as it was then called, *quality*, in Shrewsbury: so my Talking Friend told me with an ominous shake of his leaves, which was a prelude generally to no good news. His report was that the rector of Hanwood had been in Shrewsbury, according to his weekly visit there (pretty much the custom still in the country round about), and came home very ill-satisfied with what he had heard from the Duke of Richmond's, the Duke of Norfolk's, and the Duke of Suffolk's attendants. What, he hardly knew; but clearly there was something about to be perpetrated by the high estates of the realm, which would not and could not be for the benefit of the Religious—secular or regular.

And certainly, as far as dates go, my Talking Friend was correct, for all these nobles were in Shrewsbury, and their entertainment was according to the hospitalities of our good old county, which still remain. 'The Duke of Richmond,' our historians tell us, 'was Henry, surnamed Fitzroy, son of Henry VIII. by a Shropshire lady, wife of the Lord Talbois, and daughter to Sir John Blount of Kinlet. He was at this time a youth of sixteen years, had been appointed Lord High Admiral of England, Lieutenant-General and Warder of the Scottish Marches, and now visited Shrewsbury on his way to

take possession of the Holt in Flintshire, formerly a place of great importance under the name of Castle Lyons.'

The unpleasant discussions which the rector of Hanwood heard on this occasion referred evidently to the avarice of Henry and his courtiers, and to the hungry glances they cast on the revenues of the religious houses, speaking of them in terms the most severe. And it was from about this time, 1535–6, that we date the destruction of the lesser monasteries and houses. The spark, however, was laid for the conflagration many years back, and, as Fuller says, Wolsey was the first confounder of abbeys. 'The more the pity that, having of his own such a flock of preferment, nothing but the poor man's ewe lamb would please him; so that, being to found two colleges, he seized on no fewer than forty small monasteries, turning their inhabitants out of house and home, and converting their means principally to a college in Oxford. This alienation was confirmed by the present Pope Clement VII. So that, in some sort, his holiness may thank himself for the demolishing of religious houses in England.' Or, as more fully expressed in a later passage of his 'Church History': 'Intending to erect two fair colleges, one where he was born, in Ipswich, the other where he was bred, in Oxford; and finding himself unable to endow them at his own charges, he obtained license from Pope Clement VII., anno 1525, to suppress forty smaller monasteries in England, and to lay their old land to his new foundations, which was done accordingly; for the cardinal thought that their petty houses, like little sparks of diamonds, were inconsiderable in themselves, whereas they would make a fair show if all were put together into two jewels only (his two colleges), and he carry away all the credit thereof—an action condemned by the conscientious in that age, accounting it essential to charity that the thing given be the proper goods of the donor. As for the poor people formerly living in these their dissolved houses, they may be presumed more religious than others that were richer, poverty being a protection for their piety, and they unable to go to the cost of luxurious extravagances. I find not what provision was afterward made for these helpless souls, turned out of house and home; so that it is suspicious that the cardinal,

notwithstanding his prodigious hospitality, made more beggars than ever he relieved.'

However, matters lay still for a while, like some unhealthy wen or tumour. All imposthumes, nevertheless, come to a head, or kill, and so was it in this case; and so in the year 1536 the lesser monasteries were suppressed, that is to say, houses under 200*l.* yearly. It was upon this occasion that Stokesly, Bishop of London, said: 'These lesser houses were, as thorns, soon plucked up; but the great abbots were like putrefied old oaks, yet they must needs follow; and so would others do in Christendom before many years were passed.' A biting speech this, and one which would, no doubt, have grievously offended my Talking Friend. 'A putrefied old oak,' indeed!

There can be no doubt whatever that a great many of the charges brought against the religious houses of those days were groundless, and it was a pleasant thing to courtiers and chartered libertines to rail against them in their cups.

But, after all, it must be admitted there had been, and were, great irregularities in many of those houses; and perhaps, after reading all the histories of the time, we may look upon Dr. Short's summary as being as fair as any: 'The vicious lives and conversations of the religious,' as they were denominated, were too notorious not to call forth the indignant animadversions of their enemies; and, as might have been expected, the guilt of individuals entailed a great degree of infamy on the body in general. We have, however, so many authentic documents of their gross profligacy and superstitious knavery that little doubt can be entertained of either their guilt, or the benefit which morals have received by the suppression of monasteries. But there were several exceptions to this extensive condemnation; and in many of the convents visited by the Commissioners not only was real devotion to sound morality found to exist, but the liberal hospitality and charitable magnificence of the members merited for them that love which was felt towards the monastic orders by a large portion of the community, particularly by the common people. As Stow says: 'It was a pitiful thing to hear the lamentation the people in the

country made for them; for there was great hospitality kept among them.'

Meanwhile, as the old northern proverb tells us, which Bewick loved and illustrated in one of his *then* incomparable vignettes: 'Good times and bad times and all times pass over.' But it was not long before the ominous conversation which had attracted the attention of the venerable rector of Hanwood, produced still bitterer fruit, and another visitation came and touched the old town heavily. Comparatively speaking—and reverently, to use prophetic language—the king had only 'lightly afflicted the land' in which the Old Oak dwelt, for the first dissolution came no nearer than Buildwas and Ironbridge; but 'afterwards did more grievously afflict it,' and in 1539 the death-blow fell upon the abbey and the abbot of Shrewsbury, under 31 Hen. VIII. c. 10, when all monasteries were dissolved and granted to the king, on which Burnet states in his 'History of the Reformation,' 'upon the whole matter this suppression of abbeys was universally censured'; to whom the reader is also referred for the bishops whom Henry intended to make, amongst whom was Shrewsbury, previously to this named as the see of a suffragan 'for the more speedy administration of the Sacraments, and other good wholesome and devout things, and laudable ceremonies, and the increase of God's honour, and for the commodity of good and devout people.' Our historians state: 'One only BISHOP OF SHREWSBURY has occurred to our inquiries: Lewis Thomas, late abbot of Kymere (i.e. Cwmhir), who was consecrated *Suffragan Bishop* of the See of Salop by Archbishop Cranmer, June 24, 1537. He was also instituted to the rectory of Llantaroc, in Wales, and died in 1560 or '61.' To which may be added from a later page, and with reference to the passage of Burnet above quoted: 'Shrewsbury was to have become the seat of a bishop, who was to have been endowed with the revenue of the abbey, and to have comprised in his diocese the counties of Salop and Stafford. We are assured that John Boucher, abbot of Leicester, was actually nominated BISHOP OF SHREWSBURY; and hence, no doubt, the tradition—so gratifying to the pride of every true Salopian—that their forefathers had the offer of having

their borough converted into a city, but that they preferred continuing to inhabit 'THE FIRST OF TOWNS.'

No heavier blow ever betided the old town than the dissolution of its abbey, and it was one over which the then rector of Hanwood grieved sadly; for although his intimacy might not have been so great there as that of some of the former priests of Hanwood recorded in these pages, yet had he always been an acceptable guest; and it was, as we have seen, on the occasion of one of his visits that he heard the first ominous conversation which led him to conclude that some misfortune was not far off. The talk of hungry courtiers was very perilous. Any one of them might be *factus ad unguem*—fashioned to a nicety—but the condor's or the vulture's or the eagle's appetite was there, where the abbeys were tottering. They had, moreover, a particular and distinct form of speech amongst themselves, which the old rector could not away with. They laughed pleasantly on the one side of the mouth, whilst on the other there was a sort of clammed and biting irony.

When the time of destruction came, Thomas Botelor, or Butler, was in the abbot's chair, elected and confirmed July 30, 21 Hen. VIII., 1529; so that he had held his post, no doubt with fear and trembling, for about ten years. Like others, he must have been able to read the signs of the times. Little or nothing, I believe, is known of him, and my Talking Friend had no recollections of anything which the rector of Hanwood had said about him, save that he was hospitable and kind-hearted, and always welcomed him if he met him coming in by the private alley on the Meole brook, which fed the abbey pools, not only with its best fish, but with pure water also. The total income of the abbey in his days appears to have been 572*l.* 15*s.* 5¾*d.* Four hundred years after its foundation its seal was broken and the house dissolved, and—as the phrase then concocted was—*given to the king*. Those who would not give to the glutted horse-leeches of the day might read their destiny in the execution of Richard Whiting, Hugh Feringdon, and John Beele, abbots severally of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester, November 14, December 1 in this same year. But no traitors were they,

though executed as such. Like honest men and true they would have held their own.

The abbot of Shrewsbury was pensioned off, March 6 following the surrender, with 80*l.* per annum, which, say our historians, 'would perhaps go as far as 600*l.* would at present.' For the after-fortunes of the abbey the reader is referred to their faithful and interesting pages, a work in which fewer errors have had to be corrected than in almost any of such extent which have ever been published.

As long as he lived, said my Talking Friend, which was for many years to come, the old rector of Hanwood never ceased to speak of what he called sacrilege and spoliation—for such he always considered the dissolution of the neighbouring abbey to be, where, as old Fuller said, 'Whosoever brought the face of a man, brought with him a patent for his free welcome till he pleased to depart, if poor and destitute.' Indeed, when any objected to the profuse hospitality of the place, and called it mistaken charity, his views were given in almost the very words of that interesting historian: 'All this is confessed; yet by their hospitality many an honest and hungry soul had his bowels refreshed, which otherwise would have been starved; and better it is two drones should be fed than one be famished. We see the heavens themselves in dispensing their rain, often water many stinking bogs and noisome lakes, which moisture is not needed by them, yea, they the worse for it, only because much good ground lies inseparably intermingled with them, so that either the bad with the good must be watered, or the good with the bad must be parched away.' There is a fallacy in this, but much truth likewise; and at the time when the abbot's parlour, and the library, and the refectory, were closed for ever, who need wonder at the old rector's indignation? My Talking Friend said he was very near getting into very serious trouble on the last visit of the Commissioners—January 24, 1539–40—by repeating in the presence of one of them, as he superciliously entered the chapter-house, some notorious lines—'as your uncle John told me, sixty years and more since—from an epode of your favourite Horace.' I bethought me for a moment, and concluded the lines were these—

Videsne, Sacram metiente te Viam
Cum bis trium ulnarum toga,
Ut ora vertat huc et huc euntium
Liberrima indignatio?

Meanwhile, the Corporation of Shrewsbury tried to do what they could, and made their petition to have a portion, at least, of the revenues of the abbey converted into a college or a free school; but, for the present, all in vain. There were too many hungry mouths to be filled. 'And now,' says Burnet, 'were all the monasteries of England suppressed; and the king had then in his hand the greatest opportunity of making royal and noble foundations that ever king of England had. But, whether out of policy, to give a general content to the gentry by selling them at low rates, or out of easiness to his courtiers, or out of an unmeasured lavishness in his expense; it came far short of what he had given out that he would do, and what he himself is deemed once to have designed. The clear yearly value of all the suppressed houses is cast up, in an account then stated to be, viz. 131,607*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.* as the rents were then rated; but were at least ten times as much in true value. Of which he designed to convert 18,000*l.* into residences for eighteen bishoprics and cathedrals; but of these he only erected six, as shall be afterward shown. Great sums were indeed laid out in building and fortifying many ports in the channel and other parts of England, which were raised by the sale of abbey-lands.'

In referring the reader for further information to Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Fuller, and Collier, I cannot help giving the words of the latter: 'By what hath been related already, it is pretty plain the lives of the *Religious* were not so irregular as some authors represent them. But, granting this charge had been true, it would have been no sufficient reason to have seized their estates. If insobriety and misbehaviour were sufficient grounds for forfeiture; if ill-using and not answering the ends of an estate would justify the dispossessing the owners, property would be very precarious, and the English tenures slenderly guarded.'

The abbey of Shrewsbury was one of the haunts of my boyhood—in those days I had friends there, dear to me as my

own soul ; yet not even they (one, perhaps, excepted whom I will call CHARLIE, not '*o'er*' but '*on this side the water*') knew at all how I was as it were spell-bound to the spot, and examined, really and dreamily, every secret cranny of it. But those days are past and gone ; and age, with its loss of innocency but not loss of hope in looking onwards, is upon me. Nevertheless, once every year, I revisit the old spot, and dreams of the poet come over me, as I read haply the words on the old door :

REVERENCE MY SANCTUARY.

Somewhere about this time the rector of Hanwood brought home with him a parchment book, like to one he had seen at the Holy Cross in Shrewsbury, and spoke of it beneath the shade of the Old Oak. As the reader will readily anticipate, it was the new Register Book introduced by Cromwell's Injunctions, September 1538, in the thirtieth year of Henry VIII. Oddly enough at their first introduction they were received with suspicion, but their value was soon acknowledged, and they may now be considered amongst the most valuable records of the time.

As to Thomas Cromwell, no mention was made of him, as far as I can call to mind, by my Talking Friend ; but we all know that he was Wolsey's faithful servant, and defended him in Parliament when the lords brought their accusations against him. 'Hence,' says Fuller, 'he defended his master with such wit and eloquence that even those who hated the client yet praised the advocate who pleaded in his behalf. This was the first time that public notice was taken of Cromwell his eminent parts, and advantageous starting is more than half way in the place to preferment, as afterwards in him it came to pass.' It has been said that he was a fixed friend to the Reformation, but (' that odious but ') he must always be considered a mixed character with a blot on his escutcheon, for, beyond a doubt, much worldliness hangs to his transactions as concerns the abbeys and monasteries. For some ten years or more he stood conspicuous for his greatness, and then Nemesis fell upon him ; and the king's displeasure and the nobles' envy and the hatred of the people brought him down

from his pride of place to the scaffold. As Fuller says again: 'For his being the king's vicar-general in spiritual matters, all the clergy did rage thereat, grutching much that King Henry the substance, and more that Cromwell his shadow, should assume so high a title to himself. Besides, Cromwell's name was odious unto them on account of the abbeys dissolved, and no wonder if this Samson plucking down the pillars of the Popish Church had the rest of the structure falling upon him.' Our history, however, is no further concerned with him; but we may say in parting:

> O happiness, thou dost not leave a trace
> So well-defined as sorrow!

It was after the dissolution of the monasteries that Leland, the antiquarian, passed through Shropshire, and, on his way to Shrewsbury, through the valley of the Rea. 'He was an elderly man,' the venerable rector of Hanwood said, 'of a keen, quick intelligence, with a melancholy, inquiring eye; thin, well-defined, Roman nose; and lips that seemed the depositories of knowledge.' Such, pretty much, was the figure of the King's Antiquary, so constituted under the Broad Seal, A.D. 1533, in the 25th year of his reign, and, as such, he travelled for six years consecutively—the fragmentary results of which travel we have in the 'Itinerary' and the 'Collectanea.'

What the old rector of Hanwood said of his melancholy was prescient, as we know that in his latter days, through toil and wearing, his spirits became so depressed as that half his labours were lost to posterity. If William Botonor's notes on 'Travel in England' are the earliest, then certainly Leland's are the most interesting, and we must always owe a debt to the laborious Hearne for editing them. What he says of Shrewsbury has been referred to before, and his name is introduced here because he journeyed from Caux Castle, through the valley of the Rea, to the good old town, 'aboute halfe a mile ere he got to whiche, he passed by a forde over Meole river, bearinge the name of the brooke,' that is to say of the Rea, so often mentioned in these pages.

As concerns Leland, readers who would search for more

information will find it in the 'Lives of the Antiquaries,' and there is an interesting article on travelling in England in a recent number of the 'Quarterly Review' (No. 231) which will well repay the reading. Learned readers know well enough how Harrison, Drayton, and Camden even, were indebted to his labours, and had to defend themselves against the charge of plagiarism. Old Fuller gives the paper of verses entitled 'Leland's Supposed Ghost,' which tell of Polydore Virgil's theft and mention Camden also by name. He had, however, spent thirty years in travelling over the ground on which Leland had only spent five or six.

I happened one market-day to be speaking of the quantities of beer drunk in this country by the people generally, and I had cause enough to remark upon it, seeing how unsteadily the farmers and their labourers returned from the town. It was upon this occasion that my Talking Friend said that beer, at least hopped beer, was by no means so common at the period we are now treating of, adding that if I would refer to ancient documents with which he knew I was sufficiently familiar, I should find that in those days more was done for wine than for beer, though as early as 1536 there was a noted brewery in the town at which the best ale was sold at $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ per gallon. There was, in fact, in Henry VIII.'s days, a great prejudice against hops, and brewers were ordered not to use them in their brewings under a penalty of *6s. 8d.* The rector of Hanwood, however, did not at all fall in with this view, and called it a vulgar error, and it was his custom to train the hop-bind as an ornament over his rustic porch. He had consulted his friend, Master Roger Thorns, on the matter, said my Talking Friend, and he told him that the hop was one of the best bitters of the day, far better than wormwood, and that it made an excellent pillow in sickness.

The Thorns were very old inhabitants of Shrewsbury and amongst its earliest aldermen, connected with the Kynastons and afterwards with the old Saxon family on the Rea-side. The extract following will corroborate the Old Oak's statement: "*Anno* 1531. Dyed Master Roger Thorns, called *The Wyse Thorns* of Shrewsbury, for that bothe towne

and countrye repaired to hym for advyse: who gydyd thys towne polytyckely, and lyethe buried in St. Mary's Churche.'

Similar documents establish the allowance of wine to preachers. For instance, the abbot of Hylton is allowed 20*d.* for preaching at Salop in 1517, having come there from the small Cistercian house near Newcastle, in Staffordshire; and in 1521, 'a gallon of wine is given to a friar of the Order of St. Francis, called Dr. Smith, after a preaching by him made at St. Chad's Church, 8*d.*' Anyone who examines the extracts from the Old Town's accounts will find that the payments for select preachers (as we should now call them) were generally an allowance for wine. Dr. Duffhill, the warden of the Grey Friars, probably the Dr. Francis of Leland, was a famous preacher, and in 18 Henry VIII. had a gallon of wine given him '*post sermonem ejus factum.*'

One Easter Monday, on his return from Shrewsbury, the rector of Hanwood and the rector of Pontesbury held a long conversation on the 'lifting' or 'heaving' they had witnessed there. They said there were ropes tied across the streets, and that it exceeded anything they had ever witnessed in the country either at Easter or Hocktide, and that it was an old custom which they could not well approve of. At Pontesbury, indeed, and at Cherbury, it had led to great irregularities. On the present occasion they said that at the bottom of Mardol, and the Wyle, there was nothing but confusion, and that men and women were huddled together in heaps.

No doubt this is a custom of very great antiquity, and, strange as it may appear, it was intended to be a figure of our Lord's Resurrection. One of the earliest records of it we have is that of the Ladies of the Bedchamber *heaving* or *lifting* Edward I., or Longshanks; nor can the custom be said to be even yet extinct in some of the Midland counties and in the north, where still the men lift the women on Easter Monday, and the women the men on Easter Tuesday. There is a letter in Brand's 'Popular Antiquities' dated 1799, from Thomas Loggan, who gives an account of how he was lifted by the maids at the Talbot Inn to his great surprise. When I was at Mr. Case's in 1812, I perfectly well recollect witnessing the riotous scene at the bottom of Pride Hill. There was a rope

thrown across the street, and, if I remember right, the chair in which the men lifted the women was gaudily decked out with ribbons, and palms, and spring flowers, amongst which, we may be sure, the daffodil was not omitted. It was later than the time we are writing of, in the reign of Edward VI., 1548–9, 'that on lifting-day two young men were smothered under the Castle hill, hiding themselves from the maids, the hill falling there upon them'; but this appears to have been on Hock-Tuesday, or the Tuesday fortnight after Easter Tuesday, when similar riotous ceremonies were observed, and, as it appears, more particularly by the women. The historians of Shrewsbury, who give an interesting account of the *Hochzeit*, call it *Binding Tuesday—Dies Martis ligatorius*—designed probably 'to represent the stratagems which the English women employed on St. Brice's Day, 1002, to assist their husbands in murdering their Danish masters.' Of the interchange of the days nothing is known, and we cannot say with Shakespeare, 'This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.' But what is here stated is worth recording in a page of local history, as few, probably, much under sixty, can recollect seeing what I saw on Pride Hill.

Up to this time, one way and another, the Reformation was on the advance, and the names of Tindal and Miles Coverdale were constantly mentioned by the rector of Hanwood's old friend Hans Dhiel on his annual visit, and amongst other remarkable incidents he told how they both escaped the plague at Hamburg, adding 'They were so faithfully and devoutly occupied that they had not time to be sick.' This, I suppose, is what is recorded by old Fuller on Fox's authority. 'They went through the work, even when the sweating sickness swept away thousands in the city with a general mortality, as if the awful sweating of their brains were a preservative against the hurtful sweating of their bodies. And, indeed, painfulness in a lawful calling is the best antidote against a public infection.'

But shortly after the hopes of the Reformers were damped, and the Reformation seemed rather to go backwards by the introduction of the Six Articles—'that whip with six knots, as Fuller calls it, 'each one (as heavily laid on) fetching blood

from the backs of poor protestants.' Such was the Act brought in—31 Hen. VIII. c. 14—for abolishing diversities of opinions in certain articles concerning Christian religion. Such was the title given—I use the words of a useful summary—'to a merciless statute, better known as the Statute of the Six Articles, the passing of which proved a great discouragement to Cranmer and other sincere friends of the Reformation. Transubstantiation, communion in one kind, vows of chastity, private masses, celibacy of the clergy, and auricular confession, were asserted to be agreeable to the law of God; the denial of the first was to be punished as heresy, the rest as felony. Commissioners were appointed to carry the act into execution; but the number of offenders was found so great (500 were apprehended in London alone in a short time, principally for denying the real presence) that the Romish party became alarmed and ventured to enforce its penalties but in a few instances.'

Rather than comply with the Articles, old Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, and Shaxton, Bishop of Salisbury, resigned their sees, and were imprisoned as heretics. It is with reference to them that Lord Herbert of Cherbury observes, 'So that if Sir Thomas More and the Bishop of Rochester had their scruples about the supremacy, these men were as conscientious about the Articles.' And, as I remember, it was after the passing of this Act that Hans Dhiel noted a marked change in the countenance of Cranmer, and told it to the rector of Hanwood beneath the shade of the Old Oak. Its sedate cheerfulness seemed discomposed, and the lustre of his pleasant laughing eye seemed to be dimmed.

Somewhere about this time there was a great drought, and the Rea, said my Talking Friend, was almost dried up. Hans Dhiel was on a visit in Shrewsbury at this time, and remarked upon the extraordinary price of pickerel and salmon. So costly, indeed, were they, that none were given at the great Guild Feast, where it was usual to set on the board the chiefest dainties of the land. The London and the Welsh dealers were never better treated than in the old town of Shrewsbury. By the accounts still extant the price of food seems to have kept up. For instance, we find under 1542, 'two pickerels 9*s*.,

'a salmon and a pickerel 8*s*.,' a most extraordinary price, unless there is some mistake in the deciphering. Perhaps the year of the drought above alluded to is fixed by old Stow, for he states under the year 1540: 'The latter end of this summer was universally through this realm great death by a strange kind of ague and fluxe, with some pestilence; in which season was such a droght that wells and small rivers were dried up, so that much cattel died for lacke of water.' My Old Friend was seldom far out in his reckoning. With our memories Time's felt-shod foot deals not so easily!

> Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis,
> Et fugiunt, freno non remorante, dies!

On April 26, 1542, a new Charter was granted to the town of Shrewsbury, and on that occasion the rector of Hanwood dined at, and the rector of Pontesbury his friend was summoned to, a great banquet there, and, possibly, were not altogether satisfied with the Charter, for by it the bailiffs and burgesses of Salop within the ancient limits enjoyed all the franchises and privileges which the last abbot, Thomas Butler, did before the dissolution, including the long-contested portion called Maryvale. The priests of Hanwood, as we have seen, had been guests at the abbey from time immemorial, and the more modern rector's prejudices would naturally be in favour of the old spot. Indeed, the present rector referred more than once to the increase of beggary since the dissolution. We, in these days, know how Sir Thomas More spoke of it in his 'Utopia,' and how old Latimer somewhere said that 'two acres of hemp sown up and down England would not suffice to hang the thieves in it.'

It was in the year 1543 that Hans Dhiel spoke about a notorious council which was about to be gathered together by the Romanists; which gives a date. For it was at the latter end of that year—December 13—that the Council of Trent held its first session, nominally for the reformation of manners, and discipline, really against the Reformation. Except through Hans Dhiel the good rector could have known nothing about it; but after his mention of it he heard much about it, and considered it well, and came to the conclusion

of Jewel thus stated to Mr. Harding: As for your Council of Trident, God wot it was a silly convent, for aught that may appear by their conclusions.'

It was towards the latter end of Henry's reign that a heavy storm passed over the midland counties, and it was one which seriously injured the Old Oak. He heard it, he said, rushing and roaring up from Habberly Hole, and it came upon him like a clap of thunder. Numbers of oaks were quite destroyed in the adjoining woods, and two or three of his own tallest branches were snapped off like some weak poplars. Only the willows, he said, by the brook-side could bend before such a blast, and had it not been for his well-grounded faith and trust in his own deep-driven roots, his very heart of oak must have sunk within him! I suspect we may here again appeal to the authority of old Stow, for under the year 1545 I find the following: 'About the twenty-five of June was a great tempest of wind in Darbishire, when thorough trees were overturned and divers Churches, Chappels, and houses were uncovered. Also in Lancashire there felle haile stones as bigg as men's fists, which had divers prints in them, some like men's faces, some like gunneholes,' &c.

It was November 24 of this year that the Parliament began 'wherein was granted to the king a subsidiate,' and on its prorogation (December 24) it was that the king, instead of his chancellor, made that celebrated oration 'set down to Edward Hale,' in which occurs the passage following, not to be omitted, for it would apply to ours and to other times, and will apply most likely to the end of time. I give it as it stands in Stow's 'Chronicle.' Passing by what he says of the laity and the temporalty, he thus addresses the clergy:—

'I heare daily that you of the Cleargie preache one against another, teach one contrary to another, envying one against another, without charitie or discretion: some be too stiffe in their old *mumpsimus*, other be too busie and curious in their new *sumpsimus*: thus all men almost be in variety and discord, and fewe or none preache truely and sincerely the Word of God, according as they ought to doe. Shall I judge you charitable persons doing thus? No, no! I cannot so doe.

Alas! how can the poore soules live in concord, when you Preachers sow amongst them in your sermons debate and discord? Of you they looke for light, and you bringe them into darkness. Amende these crimes, I exhorte you, and set forth God's Word both by true preaching and good example giving, or else I, whom God hath appointed His Vicar and High Minister here, will see these divisions healed and these enormities corrected, according to my verie dutie, or even I am an unprofitable servant and untrue officer.'

Remarkable words these to be put into the mouth of Henry VIII. whom Taylor, the Water Poet, makes to say in his 'English Monarchs':—

> I banisht Romish Usurpation vaine,
> . . . . . .
> I made and marred, and I did, and I undid,
> Till all my greatnesse in a grave was hid!

As old Stow puts it: 'He deceased at Westminster on the eight and twentieth daye of Januarie, being Friday, in the yeare of Christ 1547, beginning the yeare at Christmasse, but after the advent of the Church of England *in anno* 1546, when he had reigned 37 yeares, nine moneths, and odde dayes, and was buried at Windsor with great solemnity'—in the tomb, says Fuller, 'which Cardinal Wolsey built for King Henry, and not for himself as is commonly reported. Wherefore, whereas there goeth a tale that King Henry, one day finding the Cardinal with the workmen making his monument, should say unto him, "Tumble yourself into this tomb whilst you are alive; for, when you are dead, you shall never lie therein": it is a mere fiction; the Cardinal originally intending the same for the king, as appeareth by the ancient inscription thereupon, wherein King Henry was styled "lord" (not king) "of Ireland," without addition of "supreme head of the Church," plainly showing the same was of ancient date in the days of the Cardinal.'

There are many allusions to this tale, and it will explain the last line of the following extract from the Water Poet's 'Memorial of Monarchs':—

> One sonne and two faire daughters he did have,
> Who each from other did the crown receive:

> The first was Edward, Mary next, whose death
> Left state and realme to Queen Elizabeth.
> He thirty-eight yeares kept his royal Roome ;
> At Windsor hee's inter'd *without a Tombe.*

I suppose it will be no easy matter to draw a fair and exact character of Henry VIII. No, not even after the discovery of all the modern documents, and the fervour, the judgments of Sharon Turner or Froude. However great as a king ; however—to use the words of Warner in his 'Albion's England,' so well worth reading :

> His minde, his words, his looks, his gait, his lineaments and stature
> Were such for majestie as shew'd a King composed by Nature ;—

the taint of blood was upon him as a man, and 'the well-being of society requires that no apology should be offered for any act of inhumanity.' And, admitting him to have been a great king, it is hardly possible to concede that he at all approached to the excellence of a good man. Perhaps, after all, what Lord Herbert of Cherbury reports is most deserving of our attention : 'With all his crimes, yet he was one of the most glorious princes of his time : inasmuch that not only the chief potentates of Christendom did court him, but his subjects in general did highly reverence him, as the many trials he put them to sufficiently testified. But what the prince was, and whether and how far found excusable in point of state, conscience, or honour, a diligent observation of his actions, together with a conjuncture of the times, will (I conceive) better declare to the judicious reader than any factious relation on what side soever. To conclude : I wish I could leave him in his grave.'

And so we have Henry not a Protestant, but hardly a Papist, though in his will he doth 'instantlie desire to require the Blessed Virgine Marie's prayers.' Of Luther it was said that he hatched the egg which Erasmus laid, and so, in some ways, politically at least, Henry nursed the Reformation, and 'seeing popery began even now to reel and stagger, within few years we shall have it tumble down, and lay prostrate with the bare turf at the footstool of truth.' But, as has been hinted at

more than once in these pages: 'His largest claim to our gratitude is that he at last permitted the great fountain of religious truth and intellectual piety to be opened to the people, by sanctioning the translation and circulation of the Scriptures in the national language; thus making free to every one, what millions have blessed him for, and what the profoundest of our scholars, the great Lord Bacon impressively calls:—'Sacred to inspired Divinity; the SABBATH and PORT of all men's labours and peregrinations.'

On putting some questions to my Talking Friend relative to the state of the country around him at this time, he told me that agriculture was on the advance, and that labour was not at so easy a price as it had been in previous reigns. And what he stated is confirmed by our most recently discovered letters and documents. Indeed we find that a day's labour at this time was a hard matter. According to 6 Hen. VIII. c. 3., from the middle of March to the middle of September, it was from before five in the morning till between seven and eight. During the other months it was from the 'springing of the day' till evenfall.

During the Wars of the Roses, horticulture, or rather gardening, had been much neglected, but now it revived again, and the rector of Hanwood constantly spoke of his 'apples and pears, and especially of his corrints' (which we call currants and which came originally from Zante and the Gulph of Corinth), to say nothing of his cabbages and turnips, and 'sallads,' such as Queen Catherine loved, and had imported from Holland and Flanders. It was a pleasant subject of conversation between himself and the rector of Pontesbury when they met under the Old Oak, and he told his friend how he was indebted to good Hans Dhiel for all his seeds—as well as for his apricots and cherries which he re-introduced into these parts. One or two only remained in the abbey garden, brought by pilgrims in the time of the Crusades. The extract following, from Lambarde's 'Perambulation of Kent,' illustrates what is here said on the more general application of gardening under this date:

'Our honest patriot, Richard Harrys, fruiterer to King

Henry VIII., planted by his greate coste and rare industrie, the sweete Cherry, the temperate Pippin and the golden Renate. For this man, seeing that this Realm, which wanted neither the favor of the sun, nor the fat of the soil, meet for the makyng of good apples, was, nevertheless, served chiefly with that fruit from foreign regions abroad, by reason that (as Vergil saide),

Pomaque degenerant succos oblita priores;

and these plants, which our ancestors had brought hither out of Normandy, had lost their native verdour, whether you did eat their substance, or drink their juice, which we call Cyder; —he, I say, about the year of our Lord Christ 1533, obtained 105 acres of ground in Tenham [*i.e.* Teynham], then called the Brennet, which he divided into ten parcels, and with great care, good choice, and no small labour and coste, brought plants from beyond the seas, and furnished this ground with them so beautifully as they not only stand in the right line, but seem to be of one sort, shape, and fashion, as if they had been drawen thorow one mould, or wrought by one and the same pattern.'

In speaking of the old Yew-tree in the Church-yard at Hanwood which stood there where it stands now, my Talking Friend said that shooting with the bow, notwithstanding the introduction of fire-arms, still continued here, and there were some butts on the green, not far from the brook. Each bowyer had his bow of yew, besides more common ones of the wych-elm, for the practice of the people. From Robin Hood's time downward till the disguises of Bluff Hal himself, it was a pleasing pastime.

In summer time, when leaves grow green,
'Twas a seemly sight to see,
How Robin Hood himself had drest,
And all his yeomanry.

And so, at Hanwood, and at the Wakes at Pontesbury, the bow was sure to be in requisition, and the best archer was no mean man in the sight of his fellows. I am not aware that the locality of the butts is now known either at Hanwood,

Pontesbury, or Shrewsbury. Like the silver arrow of these parts it has yet to be found.

I must not omit to state that more than once in these days there was a disturbance in the Old Town, which reached as far as Minsterley, the Stiperstones, and Shelve, about foreign artisans, who seemed to be interfering with the native trade. On consulting historical records I find that the Flemings must be the parties alluded to. There is no doubt, however, but that *we* improved by *their* industry. As in Norfolk so in Wales—about Kidwelly and Llanelly—there were many settlers from the Low Countries, as they were then commonly called. With them Hans Dhiel had transactions, and it was he who persuaded the rector of Hanwood to look upon them in a very different light to what his neighbours did. In the valley of the Rea these merchants were often found, and they were purchasers both of flannel and lead. So much of this little bit of local history, and Hans Dhiel's more enlarged views of trade.

On another point he likewise enlightened the old rector.

On an occasion when he had been inveighing most fiercely against Henry for swallowing up the revenues of abbeys and monasteries, Hans checked him by saying that he had founded Trinity College, Cambridge, and was completing Wolsey's, in Oxford, though under the different name of Christ Church; adding, moreover, that he was establishing public professors in both Universities, and that it was his anxious wish that the study of Greek and Hebrew should be encouraged. As for Latin, he considered it to be the general language of all scholars.

To all of this the old rector gave his reverent attention; but it was quite clear, says my Talking Friend, that he did not like the name of Henry VIII., however much inclined to fall in generally with the views of Hans Dhiel. Evidently he thought Henry's religion had more of policy in it than sincerity. Even when he would think of him most favourably he saw the stain of much blood upon his hands, and it smelled rank in the face of Heaven.

His funeral was observed with great pomp in the old town of Shrewsbury, and the rector of Hanwood – the wind

lying that way—heard the bells tolling from morning till evening. Some weeks afterwards he also saw the hearse at old St. Chad's Church, where it remained a long while, and was a very stately one. Many people from the country went to see it; and a great many from the valley of the Rea. They certainly liked King Henry VIII.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE REFORMATION UNDER EDWARD VI.

Had this King's reign been long as it was good,
Religion in a peaceable state had stood ;—
What might have his age been, when his blest youth
So valiantly advanced God's sacred truth?

TAYLOR, the Water Poet, *Memorial of Monarchs*, p. 292, folio.

The incomparable Prince Edward (the subject of our ensuing history) was born on the twelfth day of October, in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of his father, King Henry VIII., at Hampton Court, and christened on the Monday following, being the fifteenth of the month, at the chapel there.—STRYPE, *Memorials Eccles. of King Edward VI.* vol. ii. pt. 1, p. 1.

The last winter the king fell sick of a cough, which brought him into a consumption of the lungs ; and so he lingered, and grew worse and worse, till July 6, when he piously left an earthly crown for an heavenly.—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pt. 2, p. 117.

Meanwhile the lords, with the mayor and the heralds, went to the Cross at Cheapside to proclaim Mary Queen. Pembroke himself stood out to read ; and this time there was no reason to complain of a silent audience. He could utter but one sentence before his voice was lost in the shout of joy which thundered into the air. 'God save the Queen,' 'God save the Queen,' rung out from tens of thousands of throats. (July 19, 1553.)—FROUDE'S *History of England*, vol. vi. p. 32.

After a while this Queene had worne the Crowne,
Idolatry was raised, and Truth put down.

TAYLOR, the Water Poet, *Memorial of Monarchs*, p. 293.

'WE have now,' says good old Fox the martyrologist—good, notwithstanding all blunders and mistakes—with whom and with other writers of the day it was common to compare the young king with Josias, 'brought the course of this story, through the goodness and supportation of Christ our Lord, to the mild and halcyon days of King Edward the Sixth, as

into a haven of fair and calmer weather. For like as the sea, so also the land hath ofttimes its rages and also tranquillity.'

When Henry died Edward was in his tenth year. Contrary to his father's will, which named sixteen executors and twelve counsellors, these named Lord Hertford (now created Duke of Somerset) Protector—the great favourer, as is generally supposed, of the Reformation—and so possessed him with unlimited power, at all events with such power as scarcely any subject ever possessed before. 'The first of February,' are old Stow's words, 'the Earl of Hertford was nominated, elected, and chosen, by all the Executors, to be Protector and chief Governour of the King's person, until he came to his lawful age of eighteen years, and so he was proclaimed'—evidently, as already hinted, in opposition to the views of the late king, who, as Mr. Froude says, 'in the selection of his executors was guided by the desire to leave a government behind him in which the parties of reaction and of progress should alike be represented. No individual among them was given precedence over another, because no one could be trusted with extreme power. On both sides names were omitted which might naturally have been looked for. Gardiner was struck from the list as violent and dangerous; Lord Parr, the queen's brother, Lord Dorset, who had married Henry's niece, were passed over as sectarian or imprudent; and, whatever further changes the king himself might have contemplated, he may be presumed to have desired the existing order of things in "Church and State" should be maintained as he had left it till Edward's minority should expire.'

But, whatever Henry's covert views were, 'then began King Edward his son to reign, scarce ten years old, full of as much worth as the mind of his age could hold. No pen,' continues Fuller, 'passeth him by without praising him, though none praising him to his full deserts.' It was because, in his opinion, Sir John Haywood did not write fairly, good, honest Strype wrote animadversions on his life and reign of King Henry VIII. Fuller, above quoted, followed him pretty closely, but not in his views of Edward, following Stow rather, who said, 'he was in this his youth a person of much toward-

liness in virtue, learning, and all godly gifts, as seldom hath been seen the like'—all of which Strype backs with the authority of William Thomas, one of the most learned men of those times, and afterwards one of the Clerks of the Council.

Meanwhile, the state of the country may be judged of somewhat by the state of its rulers, allowing, as usual, for much ignorance, and many disturbances. The Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Warwick, or, as afterwards called, the Duke of Northumberland, were both friends to the Reformation—they were hardly, however, to be called men of stern principle, and their friendship had much in it of policy. Certainly, it was not every one who would have applied to them Lord Brooke's words—

> Religion's fair name by insinuation
> Secretly seizeth all powers of the mind,
> In understanding raiseth admiration,
> Worship in will, which native sweet links bind
> The soul of man, and having got possession
> Give powerful will an ordinate progression.

Still, the bare fact of their joining with Cranmer and the real Reformers was a great boon, and their countenance most beneficial for the time. I say, for the time, because we are not to forget that the latter of these two ambitious men died a Romanist, and warned the people against the Protestants as 'sowers of sedition.'

And, in some senses, as the country was in general, so was the county in which the Old Oak stood. With abundant ignorance there was still a great stir about improvement and the new learning of the Reformation; all of which was most satisfactory to the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury, who, as we have seen before, were converts pretty much to the opinions of Luther, notwithstanding their love for the old abbey at Shrewsbury and its abbot, and its many hospitalities, and its library. The truth is, they were both honest but, withal, cautious men. They never concealed their opinions, and they taught to the best of their power, and the remarkable thing is that they were never reprimanded. Probably they owed this to the seclusion of the valley of the

Rea, which was much better known in the days of the Lords of Caux Castle than in the days of the Tudors. In the time, however, that we are now speaking of, whatever they might have had in Mary's days, they had nothing to conceal. They were rather in advance than otherwise of the clergy round about. At the same time they were what would now be called Conservatives, and did not wish to overturn without replacing, as was the case with 'the curate and churchwardens of St. Martin's in Ironmonger Lane, in London,' who, on February 10, 'took down the images and pictures of the saints, and the crucifix, out of this church, and painted many texts of Scripture on the walls—some of them *according to a perverse translation*, as the complaint has it; and in the place where the crucifix was, they set up the king's arms, with some texts of Scripture about it'; all of which was done in overmuch haste, and had to be redone, for the curates were committed to the Tower, and the churchwardens had to erect a new crucifix within two days, in its usual place.

At the same time, when all was ready, they were ready too, and were well satisfied when pictures and images were put down in Shrewsbury, as they were before the end of 1547. The passage following from our able historian tells of this:—

'The death of Henry was the signal in Shropshire for the commencement of the Reformation. "This yeare," says our MS. Chronicle, in Adam Mytton and Roger Pope's time, "the pycture of owre lady out of St. Mary's, and the picture of Mary Mawdalen and the pycture of St. Chadde's owt of St. Chadd's Church, were all three burnyd in the market-place, commonly called the Corne-Market." This could not have taken place before the month of May, when the new government issued its injunctions for a general visitation over England. One of their orders for this measure was that curates should take down such images *as they knew were abused by pilgrimages or offerings to them.* The sacrifice of our Salopian paintings must have taken place before October, when Mytton and Pope went out of office. In all probability it was done by express order of the visitors, when, in course of their circuit, they came to this town.'

There can be no doubt but that in many places the progress of the Reformation was hindered by the indiscreet haste of those who would have forwarded it the most. Besides this the rector of Hanwood was very well aware that there was another bar to the advancement of the people, which was this: the putting the pensioners of the different religious houses and monasteries into such preferments as were constantly falling vacant—a step taken both by the government and by the purchasers of ecclesiastical property. It was evident at once that those who had been the teachers of the *old* learning would not, in general, be encouragers of the *new*. Then, again, they were very slenderly provided for, and having to depend upon the offerings of the people (as is still the case in Roman Catholic countries), they were swayed by their wishes and predilections, which were often on the side of the *opus operatum*. It is not ignorant people only who willingly leave their religion to be wrought out by others.

> But (might I be bould to speake to them shoulde speake to me),
> A good example woulde doe goode in Churchmen, seeing they
> In saying troth are lesse believed, not doing as they say.

It was a fitting remark of Harper's to Bullinger, *Papam trucidavit non Papatum*; for Henry VIII. when he died was as much POPE SELF as ever the most lordly of the Popes. Still, the Reformation advanced, and the hopes of the old rector of Hanwood rather overcame his fears. Certainly he might have said, in the words of the old historical poem above quoted:—

> The uncles of this Orpant King, so long as they agreed,
> Upheld religion, King, themselves, and Realme in happie state:
> Which then began to ruinate when they began debate.

Under any circumstances this very clear point was gained: the Church of England acknowledged no allegiance whatever to the Church of Rome. Many think that the Protector, with all his faults and ambitious views, greatly strengthened our position, and they called him the 'good Somerset.' Be it as it may, Calvin evidently was of this opinion when he

dedicated to him his Commentaries on the two Epistles to Timothy, and in no measured tones of praise. In nothing, perhaps, did he give greater offence than in pulling down a church to build up his own house, thus noted by Stow under 1548: 'The Parish Church at the Strand, without Temple Barre, was pulled down, with Strond Lane and Strond Bridge in place whereof to build the Protector's House.' It never answers to pull down churches! And, as Hales, of Eton, said pithily, 'I have not heard that prodigals ever built churches.'

As far as I could make out from my Talking Friend, it was in the year 1548 that Hans Dhiel paid a visit again to the rector of Hanwood, spending nine days with him whilst some business was being agitated in Shrewsbury in which he was concerned. It did not appear what it was, but on this occasion he brought with him, as usual, a good deal of London news, speaking much, as he always did, on religious matters, in which he took so great an interest. Amongst other things he stated to his friend that he had heard Latimer's sermons at St. Paul's Cross and at Westminster, and that the good old bishop was as racy as ever. He told, likewise, how the Rood was pulled down at St. Paul's; and he greatly feared for the old paintings of the Dance of Death, in the Cloisters, endeared to him by the Todten-Tanz of Almaine. Many innocent customs, he thought, were likewise done away with; such as the bearing of palms on Palm Sunday, and of candles on Candlemas-day. Being, however, a great friend to the Reformation, he made allowances for many things which took place.

I may add here that his fears about 'The Daunce of Paul's' were realised in the year 1549, of which Stow's account is this: 'The 10th of April the Cloister of Paul's church in London, called Pardon-Church-Yard, with the Dance of Death, commonly called the Dance of Paul's, about the same cloister, costly and cunningly wrought, and the Chappel in the middist of the same Church-yard were all begon to be pulled downe'; to which he adds: 'About the same time the steeple and most part of the Church of St. John of Jerusalem, neare unto Smithfield, most beautifully new builded, and late

finished by the Lord Prior named Docwray, was undermined and overthrown with gunpowder, the stone whereof was applied in the building of the Lord Protector's house at the Strand.' All this, no doubt, was treasured up by the people, more especially by those who sided with the old religion. The old rector of Hanwood might have repeated to himself the well-known lines of Horace, comparing with them the verse of the Prophet Haggai: *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?*

What my Talking Friend said on the matter of singing of psalms in public, and of the pleasure the people took in it is quite correct, and the reader may see the *proviso* of the Act—'set forth and allowed to be sung in all churches,' &c. —in the useful pages of the laborious Strype. The extract following must suffice: 'As for the psalms or hymns thus allowed, they seem to be those that are yet set before and after our present singing psalms, done by Dr. Cox, W. Wittingham, Robert Wisdom, eminent divines in those times, and others; and some of David's psalms done by Sternhold, Hopkins, and others. It is certain that Sternhold composed several at first for his own solace: for he set and sang them to his organ. Which music King Edward VI. some time hearing (for he was a gentleman of the privy chamber), was much delighted with them, which occasioned this publication and dedication of them to the said king. After, when the whole Book of Psalms, with some other hymns, were completely finished in verse (done, as it seems, by Hopkins, and certain other exiles in Queen Mary's reign), this clause in the aforesaid Act gave them their authority for their public use in the Church hitherto.' The Act of Uniformity is, of course, alluded to.

Without saying anything about the homeliness of the old psalm verses, it is quite clear that psalms and hymns took a mighty hold upon the people, as was the case with the early Christians, and Hans Dhiel constantly maintained that the custom should be encouraged. Indeed, he was as much delighted with the increase of it as he was with the first legal

erection of the Dutch congregation in London at this time, and with King Edward's assent to John à Lasco's petition. It is thus alluded to in King Edward's journal of his own reign, *Anno* 1550, June 29: 'It was appointed that the Germans should have the Austin Friars for their church to have their service in, for avoiding of all sects of Anabaptists and such like.'

Hans Dhiel knew à Lasco very well, and had a high opinion of him as a powerful preacher, and told the rector of Hanwood that the old German hymns were used in his church; and it was because St. Augustine's near Broad Street, London, had been assigned to his congregation that he always visited St. Austin's Friars in Shrewsbury, discoursing largely with his friend on the changes in the times. Possibly I too may say of those friars '*Ce n'est pas le voir, que de s'en souvenir.*' For who does not love the haunts of his childhood and the friends of his childhood? And the words of Keble would flit across my mind, more hopeful than melancholy:—

> Sweet is the smile of home; the mutual look
> When hearts are of each other sure;
> Sweet all the joys that crowd the household nook,
> The haunt of all affections pure;
> Yet *in* the world even these abide, and we
> *Above* the world our calling boast;
> Once gain the mountain top, and thou art free.
> Till then, who rest, presume; who turn to look are lost.

And having mentioned somewhat out of date the several books of the time which relate to the services of the Church, I may mention here that the rector of Hanwood never entered into any discussions with his people on the subject of the Sacramental Presence. Indeed, he thought that discussions of this sort frequently touched upon irreverence, and that they would readily proceed further into irreligion and infidelity. This we now know was the case, and the cause of 'A Proclamation concerning the irreverent takers of the Sacrament,' &c. No doubt the good old rector would willingly have acquiesced in the well-known lines which were afterwards put into the mouth of Elizabeth:—

Christ was the Word that spake it;
He took the Bread and brake it;
And what that Word did make it,
That I believe and take it.

As honest Parker said, who preached in the prison at Cambridge to a sort of people loose in their lives but bound in their bodies: 'It was a holy and divine speech used by holy martyrs, who, being asked how Christ could be eaten in the sacrament, and not with the teeth, answered, *My soul knoweth how!*'

The lines following from Robert of Brunnes 'Handlyng Synne'—a very curious publication before quoted—may very well be inserted here:—

Gif thou, when thy housel shalt take,
Be yn wylle thy synne to forsake,
For evermore yn stedfeste herte,
Thoghe thou synne sone aftyr and smerte,
Git God takyth hyt not to so grete grym,
As gif thou yn tresoun receyvedest hym.

One more remark of Dr. Cardwell's on this subject is of much practical value. 'The Reformers were agreed as long as they confined themselves to the denial of the Romish doctrine; but they were immediately divided when they attempted the positive exposition of their own. Moreover, between the belief of the Lutherans, who held that the Bread and the Body were combined, and the extreme opinion of the Anabaptists, who maintained that the whole service was merely a commemorative rite, there was space sufficient within the pale of the Church for a gradation of sentiments which, naturally forming subjects to exercise the ingenuity, the learning, and the piety of the theologians, would lead them into the wide fields of discussion and difference.'

And I only add from Strype: 'Bishop Ridley declared what estimation and reverence ought to be given to this holy institution, and what danger ensued the mishandling thereof; and affirmed that in it there was truly and verily the body and blood of Christ effectuously by grace and spirit. This

some then understood again in the gross sense of the Papists, though he so meant it not.' It was quite contrary to his views.

And thus, leaving the Reformation thus advanced and most certainly advancing in the country, notwithstanding the ignorance of much of the people generally, which, as Mr. Froude puts it, must be admitted, I pass on to some local matters.

One thing about this time seems to have strongly tickled my Talking Friend's fancy: which was that an Oak, which was a pulpit for rebels, should be called the OAK OF REFORMATION. There is no doubt that this referred to Kett's rebellion in Norfolk, 'a man,' says Strype, 'of a bold haughty spirit, and of a cankered mind against the government, who would be styled the *master*, nay the *king*, of Norfolk and Suffolk.' Archbishop Parker's preaching to the rebels is well known, and, under the disturbed state of the commonalty the peaceable proceedings on Mousehold Hill, which, as Sir John Haywood says, 'hangeth over Norwich,' is remarkable. These riots, like those in the west of England, originated about the *inclosures*; and, perhaps, we may still think that the interests of the people needed looking to, though not in this rough-and-ready way at the hands of rebels. The way it came to be heard of on the banks of the Rea was this: John Rogers of the Lea had accompanied Richard Newport of High Ercall there (the son of the then high-sheriff of Shropshire), and he it was who told the strange sights he had seen to the rector of Hanwood. It was discussed under the Old Oak's shade, who was vastly indignant that *Heart of Oak* should have to submit to the wild vagaries of rebels and be called the *Oak of Reformation*. Good old Heart of Oak, he might have said with Horace,

> Ut mihi sæpe
> Bilem, sæpe jocum, vestri movere tumultus!

One day, on his return from Shrewsbury, the rector of Hanwood was in great spirits, for he had heard that the first steps were taken towards establishing a free school in the town, by which he knew the country would benefit in one

way or another. This was 3 Edw. VI. and some years before it was brought to bear, as we shall see by-and-by. It appears from the town accounts that the first instalment was paid this year. The time was passing away when it could be said scoffingly:

> Of that wysedome canne I no skylle,
> Yonge men a dayes now echone wylle
> Take upon hem to be hye counsellors,
> And saye that men with white herys
> Dote and wote never what they mene,
> But in the ende it will be sene.

Public as well as private education was on the advance, and some small fragments were to be gathered up from the ruins of the abbeys and chantries and monasteries of the land, which, in their day, did something to dispel the darkness.

For two or three years after this date I do not call to mind that my Talking Friend mentioned anything particular. But, in the spring of 1551, he said that a heavy affliction fell upon Shrewsbury especially, and more or less upon the neighbourhood, called the *sweating sickness*. Allusion has been made to it before in these pages, but a word or two more must be added, for many died of it at Hanwood and Pontesbury, and the rectors did not like their people to visit the town.

The historians of Shrewsbury give the two following extracts from the works of the celebrated 'Fui Comes,' Dr. John Kaye—or, as Cambridge men still speak, Keys.

'*Ad decimum septimum Kalendas Maias anni quinquagesimi primi supra millesimum et quingentesimum a Christo nato cum jam in alta pace omnia et tranquilla essent—subita et insueta nostris hominibus ægritudo*, SALOPIÆ, *clari munitique ad Sabrinam flumen oppidi, irrepsit.*'—*De Ephemera.*

And to the same effect in his earlier English treatise, written during the ravages of the disease: 'The fifth tyme of this fearful ephemere of Englande and pestilent sweat is this in the year MDLI of our LORDE GOD, and the fifth year of our Sovereign Lorde King Edwarde the Sixth, beginning at Shrewsbury in the middest of April, proceedinge with great

mortality to Ludlowe, Prestine, and other places in Wales, then to Wostchestre, Coventre, Oxenfoorde, and other touns in the Southe, and such as were in and aboute the way to London, whither it came notablie the seventh of July.' Such are the words of this celebrated physician ; differing in the MS. chronicle quoted by the authors only in the date of the month, the latter putting it at the xxii. of March.

It is not known what the mortality was in Shrewsbury, but from what my Talking Friend said it must have been very great. He added that the rector of Hanwood fell very sick about this time, but not of the sweating sickness, and that he was attended by a very kind and good man, a Dr. Maderne Wysbech, a physician resident in Shrewsbury, who, as well as his wife, were both of them very cunning in physic ; bearing the name that Dr. Darwin did in my childhood.

The following extract from Stow, though long, is a very valuable one, as he quotes 'John Caius' as his authority :—

'The 15 April, the infectious Sweating Sickness began at Shrewsbury, which ended not in the north part of England until the end of September. In this space what number died it cannot be well accounted ; but certaine it is that in London in fewe dayes 960 gave up the ghost. It began in London the 9th of July, and the 12th of July it was most vehement, which was so terrible that the people being in best health were sodainly taken, and dead in four-and-twenty hours, and twelve or less, for lack of skill in guiding them in their sweat. And it is to be noted, that this mortality fell chiefly or rather on men, and those also of the best age, as between thirty and fourty years, few women, nor children, nor old men died thereof. Sleeping in the beginning was present death, for if they were suffered to sleepe but half a quarter of an houre, they never spake after, nor had any knowledge, but when they wakened felle into panges of death. This was a terrible time in London, so many who lost sodainly their friends, by the sweat, and their money by the proclamation' : alluding to the first fall of the base monies, under the 9th of July. 'Seven honest householders did sup together, and before eight of the clocke in the

next morning six of them were dead: they that were taken with full stomachs, escaped hardly. This sickness followed Englishe men as well within the Realme, as in strange countries: wherefore this nation was much afeard of it, and for the time began to repent and remember God, but as the disease relented the devotion decayed. The first weeke died in London 800 persons.' In the 'Summarie' of 1604 it is 606—an easy misprint.

There is a painful accuracy in the Child King's journal:—

'*July* 9. At this time came the sweat into London which was more vehement than the old sweat; for if one took cold he died within three hours, and if he escaped it held him but nine hours or ten hours at the most; also if he slept the first six hours, as he should be very desirous to do, then he raved, and should die raving.

'11th. It grew so much, for in London the 10th day there died 100 in the liberties, and this day 120: and also one of my gentlemen, another of my grooms, fell sick and died; then I removed to Hampton Court with very few with me.'

The reader will find all this corroborated by Strype, who says: 'July 10, by reason of the new sweat the king removed from Westminster to Hampton Court; for there died certain beside the court, which caused the King to be gone so soon.' It may be added, that 'among the persons the sweat took away, Henry Duke of Suffolk, and the Lord Charles his brother, were greatly lamented, not only because of their quality, but their hopes; who, July 16, died both in one bed —at Buckden—at the Bishop of Lincoln's house, whither they had retired to avoid the sickness.'

I have referred, in an earlier page, to the remarks of the celebrated Dr. Richard Mead on the subject of the *Sudor Anglicus* or *Febris Ephemera Britannica*, as it was called commonly, and anything he wrote is always worth reading. It was his decided opinion that it was owing to 'imported contagion, because we are assured' (on the authority of Thuanus), 'that this form of sickness was not peculiar to our island, but that it had more great destruction with the same symptoms in Germany and other countries.' Under these circumstances its *peculiar* attacks

on Englishmen may be doubted, though, had it had a voice, it might have said :

> Mittor, ut dirus sapor
> Tellure rupta, vel gravem populis luem
> Sparsura Pestis.

In this same year a great hue and cry was made throughout the whole valley of the Rea about a horrible murder committed in Shrewsbury. It was, indeed, the talk of the whole country round. It was perpetrated by a wretch called Thomas Byckerstaffe, and can only be compared, for horror, with the more recent ones of Greenacre or Kohl. The reader may see the account of it in the historians of Shrewsbury. The remark of my Talking Friend was that murder was altogether a thing unheard of in this district, and that even common thefts were uncommon here. It was no praise to live—

> As if in league with Infamy.

I do not call to mind that my Talking Friend dwelt upon any further particulars of this reign, but he always dwelt feelingly on the young king's end, whose memory was so cherished by the old rector of Hanwood and his friend Hans Dhiel. In his own diary the King tells us under April 2, 1552, 'I fell sick of the measles and small-pox,' and from that time till his death he continued in a very weak state. 'In the month of January,' in the year following, as Stow puts it, 'the king fell sick of a cough at Whitehall, which grievously increased, and at the last, ended in a consumption of the lights.' From this till July he lingered on, and then, in old Warner's words,

> King Edward (entred seaventeene yeares of age, and seaven of Raigne),
> Departed to that endless rest his virtuous life did gaine.

As his last historian puts it, 'On the first Sunday in the month it was observed that the preacher at Paul's Cross did neither pray for the Lady Mary's Grace, nor the Lady Elizabeth's. On the Friday following the French ambassador detected an unusual movement: he had been promised an audience, but a message was brought to put him off. There was no longer any king in England. On the evening of Thursday July 6, the anniversary, as pious Catholics did

not fail to observe, of the execution of Sir Thomas More, the last male child of the Tudor race had ceased to suffer.'

Meanwhile, even as the Reformation progressed, what was the state of the people generally at this time? Perhaps in this secluded valley of the Rea where the Old Oak stood, the state of things was not so entirely bad as in many other places, at least, in my Talking Friend's opinion. But, Strype says severely, 'the manners of men were very nought, especially of a great sort of them;' and, certainly, in the chapter headed, 'A view of the manners of all sorts of men in these times: nobility: gentry: yeomanry: the poor: the clergy,' the picture is not a favourable one. Comparing times and seasons together we may be most thankful for those we live in—for liberty, even so late as Elizabeth's days, was not the liberty of ours. These were the days in which old Latimer called *landlords* by the evil name of *steplords*—in which might still made right, and there was little redress for the poor who had no money. The murder at Shrewsbury, as we have seen, created a great sensation in the valley of the Rea, yet were there many in the land, and the murderers often escaped by favour of the judges.

Still more painful, if possible, notwithstanding the progress of the Reformation, was the ignorance and inefficiency—not to say, the demoralisation—of the clergy. Here, as it has been fairly stated, in the neighbourhood of the Old Oak, the people were not ill off. Hanwood and Pontesbury had good rectors addicted to the *new learning*, but they were almost *isolated*, and it can be scarcely said that their tenets were held by their neighbours, of them the people would ordinarily say, 'Our curate is naught, an ape-head, a dodipot, a lack-latine, and can do nothing.' Such was the painful state of things, and the page in Burnet's 'History of the Reformation' is as painful as it is true:

'There was another thing proposed this year [i.e. 1552], for the correcting of the great disorders of clergymen, which were occasioned by the extreme misery and poverty to which they were reduced. There were some motions since about it in Parliament, but they took not effect; so one writ a book concerning it, and which he dedicated to the Lord Chancellor,

then the Bishop of Ely. He showed that without rewards or encouragements, few would apply themselves to the pastoral function, and that those in it, as they could not subsist by it, must turn to other employments; so that at that time many clergymen were carpenters and tailors, and some kept alehouses. It was a reproach on the nation that there had been so profane a zeal for superstition, and so much coldness in true religion. He complains of many of the clergy who did not maintain students at the universities, according to the king's injunctions; and that in schools and colleges the poor scholars' places were generally filled with the sons of the rich, and that livings were most scandalously sold; and the greatest part of the country clergy were so ignorant, that they could do little more than read. But there was no hope of doing anything effectually for redressing so great a calamity, till the king should be of age himself to put forward such laws as might again recover a competent maintenance for the clergy.'

Such was the state of things when Edward died and Mary succeeded!—for, loving and lovely creature as she was, and innocent as lovely, I do not think that my Talking Friend ever heard the name of the saintly Lady Jane Grey, or I should have heard him mention her, for Heart of Oak as he was, he was tender-hearted, too, and had a dash of old Romance in his noble nature. Some names, like Joseph of Arimathea's in the Gospel, are only known by the mention of others, and for some excellent deed. And so the venerable tree had not heard of her. A Twelfth Day Queen the Italians called her—she called herself no queen at all—and when the news was told her that her preconcerted reign was at an end, she only said, 'This news pleases me better than that which told me I was to have the throne; for I do not deserve it, and am not competent to fill it.' Poor child! she had little to repent of. The guilt lay with the recklessly ambitious, criminal Northumberland, 'who cared as little for religion as for any other good thing,' and within a short while died a traitor's death, having thrown a stake for a crown and lost. And thus was the tangled skein of his ambition stained with his own blood.

Kein Faden ist so fein gesponnen,
Er kommt doch endlich an der Sonnen.

which I find to be translated in Professor Max Müller's second series of lectures on the 'Science of Language':

No thread on earth so fine is spun,
But comes at last before the sun.

The chief matter which seemed to have attracted the notice of the good people of the valley of the Rea at this time was a wonderful storm which had occurred in Shrewsbury. The thunder and lightning appears to have been fearful, and it was reported, and very generally believed, that the devil was seen in the midst of it, tearing and rending the spire and the pinnacles of St. Alkmond's; and there is no doubt but that there was a great storm about this time, and that the evil effects of it were, according to the superstition of those days, attributed to the business of the evil one in a gale of wind; for it is thus recorded in the old MS. Chronicle quoted by the historians of Shrewsbury:

'Upon Twelffth Day 1553, the dyvyll appeared in St. Alkmond's church, when the priest was at highe masse, with great tempest and darckenes, so that as he passyd throughe the churche he mountyd up the steaple, teringe the wyer of the clocke, and put the prynt of his clawes uppon the fourthe bell, and toocke one of the pinnacles awaye with hym, and for the tyme stayed all the belles in the churches within the towne that they could neyther toll nor rynge;' which was, of course, a very serious evil, for, from the earliest days, it was in thunder that bells were rung.

Meanwhile, the Lady Jane Grey was relieved from her dangerous position, and Mary took her place, July 19, 1553. It was not till February 12, 1554, that this saintly creature was executed, quietly commending her spirit to her Lord. How it would have pleased the old rector of Hanwood to have read the prayer she gave to the iron-hearted Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir John Brydges, who was overcome by her goodness, and begged for a memorial!

'For as much as you have desired so simple a woman to write in so worthy a book' [it was a Manual of English

Prayers], 'good master lieutenant, therefore I shall, as a friend, desire you, and as a Christian require you, to call upon God to incline your heart to His laws, to quicken you in His way, and not to take the word of truth utterly out of your mouth. Live still to die, that by death you may purchase eternal life; and remember how Methuselah, who, as we read in the scriptures, was the longest liver that was of a man, died at the last; for, as the Preacher saith, there is a time to be born and a time to die; and the day of death is better than the day of our birth.—Yours, as the Lord knoweth, as a friend,

'JANE DUDLEY.'

The rector of Hanwood was in Shrewsbury on the day of Mary's coronation, for it was kept as a holiday there, and the poor had a great feast. In the words of Godet's 'Chronicle,' quoted by Haslewood in his 'Introduction to the Mirror for Magistrates':

> The yeare a thousand fyve hundreth fyftythre
> Was Mary cround in England queen to raigne,
> Who then allowed the Pope's authoritie;
> Erectinge eke all Papistry agayne;

but, notwithstanding that the public authorities showed themselves, and so far welcomed the accession, as the old rector said, there seemed to be a shade of melancholy and gloom cast over all, and the very Severn flowed heavily, as if strange things would come to pass, and such as, in his own mind, the venerable man augured would; for he was a thoughtful man, and meditated much on man's sins and God's goodness.

> And various form of Worthen's brow did sit,
> Reserved Discretion, reconciled to Wit;
> Serious and grave his carriage, yet a face,
> Wherein Love's fair shrine did Wisdom's temple grace.

Very little, however, is known of the way in which the change in religion was received in Shrewsbury and the neighbourhood; but probably not by acclamation, nor with such hearty good wishes as the Papists desired. Yet had they here, as well as in Warwickshire and Staffordshire, a very stronghold; and many were there amongst the people on the

Severn's side who had cause to remember pleasantly and feelingly the doles of their time-honoured old abbey, to say nothing of Haughmond hard by, and Lilleshall, and Buildwas, and the wide-renowned Wenlock, the resort of the wanderer and the home of the pilgrim when such homes were scarce. The plundering of these noble retreats still rankled in their hearts. Mr. Froude's painful sketch has its true side, and, in the words of the old poet just above quoted, it was easy to perceive in what was going on

> a rent
> Which was a sin, if not a punishment.

'To the Universities,' says Mr. Froude, 'the Reformation had brought with it desolation. To the people of England it had brought misery and want. The once open hand was closed; the once open heart was hardened; the ancient loyalty of man to man was exchanged for the scuffling of selfishness; the change of faith had brought with it no increase of freedom and love of charity. The prisons were crowded, as before, with sufferers for opinion, and the creed of a thousand years was made a crime by a doctrine of yesterday; monks and nuns wandered by hedge and highway as missionaries of discontent, and pointed with bitter effect to the fruits of the new belief, which had been crimsoned in the blood of thousands of English peasants. The English people were not yet so much in wretchedness that they would set aside for the sake of it a princess whose injuries pleaded for her, whose title was affirmed by Act of Parliament. In the tyranny under which the nation was groaning, the moderate men of all creeds looked to the accession of Mary as to the rolling away of some black nightmare.' Not a pleasant picture this, certainly.

Under such circumstances, however, Mary came to the throne, a Tudor every inch of her; and to the courage of her race, to say nothing of her attainments or of her natural abilities, was added an obstinately dogged determination—*plus quam muliebre*. But then her creed controlled her, or rather, she was controlled by her creed, and under such circumstances she was a thrall of others, who worked cruelly,

when she, perhaps, working out her own principles, might have wrought mercifully. But she was egged on by evil counsellors to earn the name of 'Bloody,' and they, it is sad to say, were driven to extremes by the provocation of Protestant ribalds, who could not see how close they ran into profaneness in ridiculing, in the way they did, the superstitions of the Romish Church. Some may think that Dr. Maitland in his 'Essays on Subjects connected with the Reformation in England' may have carried this point too far, though I am not of that opinion; but one thing is certain: the truthful extracts he has given from Knox, Goodman, Traheron, Bacon, and others, are some of the most painful ever put on paper. As for Knox, and other 'blasts' on the 'Regiment of Women,' nothing could be more offensive or disgraceful, and strange it is that they did not see the horns of the dilemma on which they were hanging themselves. 'Of course, if Mary was a thing accursed because she was a woman so was Elizabeth; and if the "regiment" of one of these creatures was "monstrous," so would be that of the other.'

As it happened the old rector of Hanwood knew less of such matters than might have been expected, for it was a fact as Fuller said (though in this reign a witness not entirely to be relied upon) that 'the dioceses of Oxford, Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester, under their respective bishops, Robert King, James Broks, Robert Warton, Richard Pates, enjoyed much quiet.' All he knew or heard was from his friend Hans Dhiel. The great horrors, naturally, reached the banks of the Severn and the valley of the Rea, but of the inner particulars and secret springs of action the country knew little.

As the grand old rector and my Talking Friend were, as I said, comparatively ignorant of these matters; though grieved at heart for the accounts that reached them of Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer, and martyrs of such note—I leave the sad recital to the pages of historians, who give them at length, and to the pages of old Fox, so earnest in the midst of all his prejudices and mistakes. Doubtless the Church has always been illumined by the martyrdom of saints, and when old Latimer said: 'Be of good comfort, master Ridley, and play

the man: We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out'—he spake a great truth, fully impressed with those old words:

Dominus illuminatio mea.

'And thus much,' in Fox's words, 'concerning the end of this old and blessed servant of God, master Latimer, for whose laborious travails, fruitful life, and constant death, the whole realm have cause to give thanks to Almighty God.'

Stow seems to have been so overcome by the thought of the barbarous cruelty exercised on these holy men that his record is as terse and short as the mention of certain executions, before alluded to, in the journal of Edward VI.

But I must now give the painful page above referred to:

'Those forlorn hours when she [Mary] would sit on the ground with her knees drawn to her face; those restless days and nights, when, like a ghost, she would wander about the palace galleries, rousing herself only to write tear-blotted letters to her husband; those bursts of fury over the libels dropped in her way; or the marching in procession behind the Host in the London streets—these are all symptoms of hysterical derangement, and leave little room, as we think of her, for other feelings than pity. But if Mary was insane, the madness was of a kind which placed her absolutely under her spiritual directors; and the responsibility for her cruelties, if responsibility be anything but a name, rests first with Gardiner who commenced them, and secondly, in a higher degree, with Reginald Pole. Because Pole, with the council, once interfered to prevent an imprudent massacre in Smithfield; because, being legate, he left the common duties of his diocese to subordinates; he is not to be held innocent of atrocities which could neither have been commenced nor continued without his sanction; and he was notoriously the one person in the council whom the queen absolutely trusted. The revenge of the clergy for their past humiliations, and the too natural tendency of an oppressed party to abuse suddenly recovered power, combined to originate the Marian persecutions. The rebellions and massacres, the political scandals, the universal suffering throughout the country during Edward's

minority, had created a general bitterness in all classes against the Reformers; the Catholics could appeal with justice to the apparent consequences of heretical opinions; and when the reforming preachers themselves denounced so loudly the irreligion which had attended their success, there was little wonder that the world took them at their word, and was ready to permit the use of suppressive measures to keep down the unruly tendencies of uncontrolled fanatics.'

It was with reference to the Marian times of fire and faggot that my Talking Friend said, speaking as an old oak might speak: 'At such times there is more copse than standard trees!'—words which reminded me of a sentence in old Fuller: 'Always, in time of persecution, the Church is like a copse, which hath in it more underwood than oaks; for great men consult with their safety; and whilst the poorer sort, as having little to lose, boldly embrace religion with both arms, the rich too often not only behold it at a distance with a smiling countenance, but dare not adventure to entertain it, except with very great secrecy.'

It has been remarked before that Shrewsbury and the neighbourhood were little concerned with the days of Mary; but, as at the Coronation, so too in honour of Philip entering into the kingdom July 19, 1554, there was a great feasting in the Old Town, altogether unacceptable to the rector of Hanwood, who could not abide the Spanish match.

Then again, at a later period—of the troubles at Frankfort, happily, nothing had reached the banks of the Rea, and as though no such troubles were in existence—

> With speculative notions rashly sown,
> Whence thickly sprouting growth of poisonous weeds,

its stream flowed onward pleasantly rippling over the gravels, musical as ever, and the old rector went in and out amongst his people, speaking amongst them the mercies of the Everlasting Gospel, and the truth as the truth is in Jesus. Trouble, it is true, was nigh at hand, but it never came nigh him to hurt him. John Marshall, vicar of St. Chad's, might be fierce and bigoted, as was his wont, but that bigotry reached not Hanwood, though the sound of the bells did, and as they

swung in that ancient tower, only increased the solemn meditations of the holy man:

> Oft in Life's stillest shade reclining,
> In Desolation unrepining,
> Without a hope on earth to find
> A mirror in an answering mind:
> Meek souls there are, who little dream
> Their daily strife an Angel's theme,
> Or that the rod they take so calm
> Shall prove in Heaven a martyr's palm.

It ought not to be omitted that this sad reign saw two new colleges established in Oxford: Trinity, by Sir Thomas Pope, March 18, 1556; St. John's, by Sir Thomas White, a Muscovy merchant, March 5, 1557. It is pleasant to catch any glimmerings of light in the midst of circumstant darkness: a time in which Strype quotes Sir Thomas Smith's words—the people 'went about their matters as men amazed, that knew not where to begin or end. And what marvel was it when here was nothing but fuming, heading, hanging, quartering, and burning, taxing, levying, and pulling down of bulwarks at home, and beggaring and losing of strongholds abroad? A few private men in white rochets ruled all; who, with setting up of six-foot roods and rebuilding rood-lofts, thought to make all cocksure.' A very sorry and sad account!

Many times, in the preceding portion of these pages, the name of Hans Dhiel has been mentioned. I will conclude them with some few incidents of this good man's life—one, like the rector of Hanwood, a convert to the new learning.

Certain Specialities in the Life of Hans Dhiel, and his Daughter Frederika.

> Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face
> Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,
> Thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name?
> Aufidius to Coriolanus, act iv. sc. v.

The name of Hans Dhiel has often been mentioned in these pages, and it has never been mentioned but with respect, for he was evidently a very good man, one of whom one might say in the words of Plautus:

Unice qui unus
Civibus ex omnibus probus perhibetur.

A merchant of the city of London, and held in much repute there amongst his fellows, he appears to have had a large connection in Wales, which brought him periodically to Shrewsbury as his headquarters. As far as I could make out from my Talking Friend, whose information was, of course, derived from the rector of Hanwood, he was at the head of the woollen-staplers and Welsh flannel-merchants of the city, dealing wholesale with them here, as well as at Pool, Newtown, and Montgomery, under the direction of the Drapers' Company at Shrewsbury. To this company, as we have seen in an earlier chapter of this history, belonged the del Water's, Watur's, Warter's, or, as named in old Latin deeds, the *De Aqua's*, of Cruck Meole on the Rea-side, whose time-honoured homestead stood hard by the Old Oak. Here, —as we have also seen, being, like Izaak Walton in after days, a friend of the angle—he was a frequent visitor; and because he was a favourer of the new learning, and had seen Luther face to face, and knew Erasmus—greatly valuing his Paraphrase—it was natural enough that he should become a great friend of the rector of Hanwood, who, for a long while, like his brother rector of Pontesbury (one of the three, but I never knew which), had been a friend to the Reformation.

What I collected relative to his history—that of his daughter Frederika, and his confidential clerk and assistant, Ernest Arnfeldt—is so broken and unconnected that I have ventured to call the disjointed fragments, after Bishop Hale, 'Some Specialities of his Life,' which, as I think the reader will agree with me, as connected with the times, is not without its interest.

Where Hans Dhiel was born, and when he came to London, I never knew exactly; but I am inclined to think that, although High Dutch—which we now call German, as contrasted with *Plat Deutsch*—was most familiar to him amongst his brethren in London, he was nevertheless a native of Holland, for, said the rector, he spoke of Delft, Rotterdam, Zutphen, Arnheim, Ghent, and Maestricht, in a way he never spoke of Frankfort, Strasburg, Basel, Zurich, Wesel, or Geneva,

though in the troubled times he was much thrown in with them, as well as with what were called the Marian exiles,

> Of which 'tis better nothing now to say,
> Than say too little.

As regards his coming to London, however, from what has been before mentioned, he must have been there in Henry VIII.'s time, for he was an elderly man in the days of Edward VI., when his visits to Cruck Meole and Hanwood were frequent, and he had been for many years in connection with the Welsh dealers and the Drapers' Company in Shrewsbury. The early part of Mary's reign, at least, found him in London ; but he could not have remained there very long ; and within a year or so, as I think, he was obliged, like the prophet of old, to fly for his life, as the well-known master of Ernest Arnfeldt, who, as we shall see further on, had fallen under the cruel watch of Bonner, next to Gardiner the most determined opponent of the Reformation in England, Reginald Pole not excepted, against whom, indeed, notwithstanding the severe censure of Archbishop Parker, Protestant writers bring few charges. It is pleasing to read in Short's 'Sketch' : 'Nor should it ever be forgotten that the side of reason and mercy found its advocate in Cardinal Pole.'

I said before that I thought Hans Dhiel was a native of Holland, and I am the rather confirmed in that view because he called the Dutchman who stood on St. Paul's steeple on Mary's coronation (at which he was present) a countryman of his. Froude, I observe, calls him 'an adventurous sailor,' and says that St. Paul's was 'rigged with yards like a ship's mast.' The reader may like to read good old Stow's account, which is curious enough : 'Then was there one *Peter*, a Dutchman, stood on the weather-cocke of St. Paule's steeple, holding a streamer in his hand of five yards long, and waving thereof, stood some time on the one foote, and shooke the other, and then kneeled on his knees, to the greate marvaile of all people. He had made two scaffolds under him, one above the Crosse, having torches and streamers set on it, and one other over the Bole of the Crosse, likewise set with streamers and torches, which could not burne, the wind was so great ; the said *Peter*

had sixteene pound, thirteene shilling, and four pence given him by the city, for his costs and paines, and all his stuffe.' It is evident from what I heard that the simple mind of Hans Dhiel was amazed by this strange exhibition. A similar one, but with a sadder end, was that of Cadman in Shrewsbury, from St. Mary's spire, over the Severn, at a later date.

Before Hans Dhiel settled in London it would appear that he had lost his wife and two promising sons. Only one child, the apple of his eye, remained to him and kept his house, by name Frederika, an excellent creature, who herself had her troubles; a lively person, however, and one of an excellent staid judgment, and quite her father's right hand in all his matters. One she was, of all others, to whom the beautiful lines of Scott in the 'Lady of the Lake' might have been justly applied.

> Some feelings are to mortals given
> With less of earth in them than heaven;
> And if there be a human tear
> From passion's dross refined and clear,
> A tear so tender and so meek,
> It would not stain an angel's cheek,
> 'Tis that which pious fathers shed
> Upon a duteous daughter's head.

Excepting their domestics—amongst whom was a doggedly self-willed but very faithful one called Jasper—the only other inmate of the household was Ernest Arnfeldt, Hans Dhiel's confidential clerk and assistant, and one to whom he and his daughter were deeply attached. He had, in truth, watched over Herman Dhiel in his long sickness, Frederika's favourite brother, the other had died young; and being a widower himself, during her father's long journeys he was Frederika's protector. She, in return for all his kindness, made their home to him a second home, and with womanly forecast anticipated all his little wants and comforts. An acute man of business and much respected, like his master, for his leisure hours he had taken up the even yet new art of printing, and greatly amused himself in cutting out rude blocks from boxwood which his friends sent him from abroad, and in shaping letters of lead. Haarlem, Strasburg, and

Mayence were to him well-loved names; and so were those of Laurenz Koster, Faust, Gutenberg, Scheffer, and Caxton. Benefactors to the human race he styled them, one and all, and great furtherers of the Reformation, which he always maintained that the art of printing led to, as a mere matter of course. Any restraint and prohibition, he thought, in this respect, did harm.

The lamented Hallam was clearly of the same opinion with Ernest Arnfeldt. 'The restraints on the printing and sale of books in England, though not so overpowering as in Italy, must have stood in the way of useful knowledge under Elizabeth. The Stationers' Company, founded in 1555, obtained its monopoly at the price of severe restrictions. The Star Chamber looked vigilantly at the dangerous engine it was compelled to tolerate. By the regulations it issued in 1585, no press was allowed to be used out of London except the one at Oxford and another at Cambridge. Nothing was to be printed without allowance of the council; extensive powers, both of seizing books and breaking the presses, were given to the officers of the crown. Thus every check was imposed on Literature, and it seems unreasonable to dispute that they had some efficacy in restraining its progress, though less, perhaps, than we might, in theory, expect, because there was always a certain degree of connivance and indulgences. Even the current prohibition of importing popish books, except for the use of such as the council should permit to use them, must have affected the trade in modern Latin authors beyond the bounds of theology.'

But to return to our narrative.

Such, in London, was the household of these three persons, which might have been called 'A Happy Family,' so much were they all attached each to the other, and so greatly beloved by their neighbours. Besides this, Hans Dhiel, being a wealthy man, kept pretty much an open table, and his hospitality, like his charities, was great. He maintained, indeed, that merchants ought always to be open-handed, and he more than once said to his old friend the rector of Hanwood, and with no little allowable pride, that the merchants of the Staple (so he would call them) had a great

hand in rebuilding St. Margaret's, Westminster, in the time of Edward I. The kindness of our own and of the foreign merchants to the exiles of Mary's reign, the good, kind-hearted, generous man did not return to tell of. It is pleasing, in the stead of what would have been his truthful report, to be enabled to give the extract which follows from Fuller: 'Many pious persons residing in England, but chiefly in London (which commonly counterpoiseth the charity of all the land besides), were very free towards their relief. Some of them, conscious to themselves of the cowardly compliance with the superstitions of the times, hoped in some degree to lessen their offences by their liberality to such exiles as were more constant and courageous than themselves in the cause of the truth; and although great the distance between London and Zurich, yet merchants have long arms, and by their bills of exchange reach all the world over. Richard Springham and John Abel, merchants of London, gave much and sent more to their support; being entreated to make over the gifts of many good people, utterly unknown to such as received them. That is the best charity which, Nilus-like, hath the several streams thereof seen, but the fountain concealed. Such silent and secret bounty, as good at all times, to avoid vain-glory, is best in bad times, to prevent danger. As for Thomas Eton, a London merchant, but living in Germany, he was, saith my author—Humphrey, in his "Life of Jewel"—"*communis hospes*, the host-general of all English exiles; thanks (and that forced on him against his will) being all the shot his guests paid at their departure."'

Hans Dhiel's residence in London was close to the precincts known so well as giving the name to Henry VIII.'s *Black* Parliament (for it began among the *Black Friars* of the city, and ended among the Black Monks at Westminster, as the place of Brave Kate's trial before Cardinal Campeggio, and as the introduction to the Parliament in which Wolsey was condemned. It was a place, as is well-known, of sanctuary, and was at that time full of hiding-places; but since the time of the second Charles till the year 1770, called the King's Printing House in Blackfriars, and since the year 1778, when 'The Times' newspaper was established, the

place from whence all 'hideous secrecy' is dispelled by the daily publication of that marvellous journal. Such was Hans Dhiel's residence at this time, liked none the less by Ernest Arnfeldt because it recalled to his mind the honoured name of Caxton, Tiptoft (Earl of Worcester), one of his great encouragers and patrons, being interred there.

From these precincts it was that this small household, as each Sunday came round, went to hear John à Lasco at the Austin Friars, near Broad Street (given, as has been stated before, for the use of the German refugees in England). It was with John à Lasco that Hans Dhiel used to converse about Erasmus and Luther to his great delight; and the worthy preacher and that whole household continued on terms of the closest intimacy till the accession of Mary, when à Lasco went to Emden, where his welcome was not great, and in 1555 founded a church at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, where all the parties after many wanderings met once more, and were the witnesses of dissension and differences which were altogether opposed to their right minds.

I may mention here that Miles Coverdale, rector of St. Magnus, and afterwards Bishop of Exeter, was a great name always in the mouth of Ernest Arnfeldt. In some way or another, following the bent before alluded to, he interested himself about printing generally, particularly about all that concerned the printing of the Bible, and hence it was—having been known also as one of John à Lasco's congregation—that he came under the notice of the myrmidons of Bonner and Gardiner, and afterwards had his name recorded and set down on the proscription lists of Reginald Pole, but whether with his knowledge or not cannot be ascertained. Indeed, there were many back-friends in those days, as there were in the days of Cicero, who clandestinely gave in the names of many to whom it was thought they were attached and friendly. In truth there have been always such in all times, and the words of the old dramatist have been painfully confirmed:

> Multi more isto atque exemplo vivunt, quos quum censeas
> Esse amicos, reperiuntur falsi falsimoniis,
> Lingua factiosi, inertes opera, sublesta fide.

For many years this household lived in honour, respected

and beloved, and it had been the great desire of the old rector of Hanwood to return with Hans Dhiel, on one of his periodical visits, to London. But the good man's occupations were many, and his parochial work absorbing; moreover, his health was never strong, and the distance was great; so the visit was never made, a point to which he reverted in after years with many regrets,

Limning true sorrow in sad silent act.

When the troubles of the household commenced I could not accurately ascertain; indeed, there were some contradictions in my Talking Friend's narrative not to be reconciled by existing dates. Probably Hans Dhiel remained in London a year or two, at least, after his friend à Lasco left, and he was present, as we have seen, at Mary's coronation. I suspect the troubles commenced after Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion, and that Hans Dhiel reached the Continent late in 1555.

At all events he was in Shrewsbury on the business of his calling in that year, and it was during his absence that Ernest Arnfeldt and his daughter Frederika were obliged to fly. How it came about I don't know, but Ernest afterwards told Dhiel he fancied it must have arisen about Gardiner's book on 'True Obedience' (thought to be the joint work of Bonner and Gardiner), a reprint of which was published by the foreign exiles. In this work it was currently reported that they both had said words offensive to the queen, relative to her mother's marriage and the unasked authority of the Bishop of Rome, and would naturally be irritated by its republication now. Whether this was really the case or not, and whether any copies of the book had been traced out and found in Arnfeldt's possession, I cannot affirm, but it is clear enough that his love of typography was the beginning of his troubles, and he had but a short notice given him that he must fly for his life. A faithful retainer of the house—what would be nowadays called a warehouse porter, perhaps—told him hurriedly one morning that search was made for him, and he lost no time in finding out a place of refuge for Frederika, whom he called the Angel of the Household.

Being a thoughtful and sagacious person he left nothing

undone that the exigencies of the case required. By means of the faithful dependent, an old German, he contrived that all his master's books and papers should be secreted and hid, which they were effectually in a double wall, and afterwards recovered ; and last, that a means of communication should be opened with him in Shropshire, where he now was, a matter of no small difficulty in those days, but a difficulty which Ernest easily managed to overcome through his friends the carriers and pack-horse men, who, when it was necessary, took good care to know no more than their horses did about the goods they conveyed from place to place and the tokens they bore.

This done, all his thoughts centred on Frederika, who was to him as a daughter, and her safety was the next thing arranged ; leaving his trusty old German to strew about the premises all his dear blocks and leaden types, and then to seek his own hiding-place—for the rest of the household had fled on the first intimation of danger. His mother-wit told Ernest that those who dogged his steps would be sure to look to his printing apparatus and to search for papers, thus giving him the more time to seek about. As for the old German retainer, to whom Frederika was as the light of his eyes, he assured Ernest that he knew of a retreat which no one could discover, adding, that when this trouble was over and past, they should be sure to meet again, as they accordingly did. 'Every clever rat,' was the saying of the old German, 'has more than one hole'—a proverb, like many others of the sort, common to all nations and languages :

Sed tamen
Cogitato, mus pusillus quam sit sapiens bestia,
Ætatem qui uni cubili nunquam committit suam,
Quia si unum ostium obsidetur, aliud perfugium petit.

Happily, as regarded Frederika, fortune favoured him at once, though at the first commencement of his flight he had to encounter many fewters or idlers, such as, Stow tells us in his 'Survey of London,' gave name to Fewters' or Fetter Lane, as it is now called, which led out of Fleet Street to the Old Bourne. Here it was, as he was carefully picking his way

with his precious charge muffled up in disguise, that he was met by one belonging to the art or mystery of the Girdlers (the name is still retained in Girdlers' Hall) a great friend of Ernest's, to whom he made himself known at once and told the state of his affairs. 'A truer man,' said he, 'dwelt not within the city walls.' Such was the man to whom he entrusted Frederika, and he took her to his house, where she remained in seclusion, as a friend of his wife's, till Hans Dhiel's return, when they both escaped over to France. For, as Burnet tells us, 'those that fled beyond sea went at first for the most part to France, where, though they were well used in opposition to the Queen, yet they could not have the free exercise of their religion granted them; so they retired to Geneva, and Zurich, and Arran in Switzerland, and to Strasburg, and Frankfort in the Upper Germany, and Emden in the Lower.'

This trustworthy friend of Ernest's had a friend of his own in Grasse Street (corrupted now into Gracechurch Street, but called really from 'the herb market kept there') named Henry Yewell, who joined hand in hand with the Girdler in protecting the poor maiden. His name, luckily, my Talking Friend remembered—as he said with a pleasant shake of his time-worn boughs—'because it began with the name of the Bowyer's tree!'

Next, having provided thus far for the safety of his master's books and papers, and for that of his cherished child Frederika, and having given his best counsel to the old German retainer, who, by the way, took charge of himself with dogged honesty and most unimpeachable trustworthiness, bidding Ernest, as he loved his master and his master's daughter, to be ready to turn up at a moment's notice or he would never forgive him—all this done, Arnfeldt had now to think about his own movements. Nor did he forget, hurried as he was, to find the means of forwarding a *second* messenger (a kind of pilgrim he was, still journeying towards old Wenlock Abbey), who was to say by word of mouth to Hans Dhiel, whom he would find in Shrewsbury, that Frederika could be met with at the Girdler's hostel he wotted of, therewith giving him a token, as the way was of old time, when

the stripling David carried the ten cheeses of milk unto the captain of their thousand, and was to look how his brethren fared, and 'to take their pledge.'

It so happened that Ernest had an old acquaintance living at Coldharborough, Upper Thames Street, in one of those 'small tenements' Stow tells of, which Francis, Earl of Shrewsbury, had built in the place of Poultney's Inn, 'now let out for great rents to people of all sorts.' To him he went in the first instance, and told him what had come to pass, and Ludwig Sebastian's advice was (such was his name) that he should contrive to secrete himself in Westminster, at that time a very common hiding-place, and one less suspected than many other of the sanctuaries of the time.

There accordingly he sped, passing (with some idea of resorting thither in case of need) the sanctuary of St. Martin's-le-Grand, into which, of old time, criminals on their way to Newgate would sometimes make their escape. It was, indeed, at this time quite a refuge for foreigners, so that Ernest would at least have found companions in his distress. When, however, he saw what was going on there, he hastened his pace, for it was evident to him that some three or four poor creatures were in the hands of their tormentors, who were hurrying them on he knew not where. Little time, in truth, had he to spare, for the crowd was soon upon him, and he must have been shouldered on with it had he not stepped aside, secreting himself beneath the old Seldam or Shod by St. Mary-le-Bow, the place whence royalty even, in those days, beheld the ridings and the joustings of Chepe—the delight of all the apprentices of the city.

Meanwhile the crowd swept on, and Ernest came out of his hiding-place and rushed forward towards the Whitefriars, that old sanctuary adjoining the Temple precincts, called in later days Alsatia (from Alzass, the wild Landgraviate of Alsace), so well known to the readers of Scott's 'Fortunes of Nigel.' Thence he crossed over the way, and fell into a great manhole in the Chancellor's Lane, which, though the bars were up, impeded his progress; for in those days nothing could be worse than the streets generally, especially the cross ones, of which this out of Fleet Street into Old Bourne was one, and indeed one, as it appears, of the worst, even so far back as

the days of Edward I., when John Breton, Custos of London, blocked it up, as the Bishop of Chichester did afterwards with two staples and a cross-bar.

Having got out of this difficulty he turned his steps in haste to the old enclosure now called Covent Garden (showing its French or Anglo-Norman root *couvent*: convent being from the Latin *conventus*), and thence reached the Seven Acres, or, as we now call it, Long Acre, the Elms of Henry VIII.'s day—from a row of those trees which grew there. Hence again he made a great push, and passed on his way to the King's Mews (the modern Trafalgar Square), the custody of which—13 Edward II.—was committed to John de la Beke, called '*de mutis apud Charryng juxta Westmonasterium*.' From this point, without much trouble, he made his way, as his friend Ludwig Sebastian advised him, to the purlieus of Westminster, and for the next two months lurked in the Ambry there, and had broken victuals from the Abbey, wont to be distributed, after the dissolution, to poor outcasts and miserables like himself, without asking questions.

And I could not help repeating to myself, as I thought of the almonries attached to our old monasteries, these well-known lines of Goldsmith—well-known because so simple and so beautiful. Sanctuaries were constantly abused, no doubt, though they had their days of usefulness; but the almonry was always the refuge of the hunger-bitten.

> For other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
> More bent to raise the wretched than to rise,
> His house was known to all the vagrant train,
> He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
> The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
> Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
> The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
> Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
> The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
> Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
> Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
> Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
> Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
> And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
> Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
> His pity gave ere charity began.

Here it was, close to the far-famed Reed-house of his beloved Caxton, that Ernest Arnfeldt managed to live, and one way or another contrived to communicate frequently with Frederika, still advising her to remain quiet in her place of concealment till he could devise means to get her over to the Continent, whether to France or Holland, as it might be. Thus, poor soul, like the wife of the Lord Willoughby of Eresby, sometime of the Barbican, was she obliged to skulk and to fly, for no offence of her own, and instead of Frederika might have now taken the name of Peregrina, as that lady's son, of whom she was delivered in a church porch in Bruges, was called from his wanderings Peregrine, 'carrying,' says Fuller, 'his foreign nativity in his name.'

Strange, but so it is, that all this trouble to Hans Dhiel's household should have originated with matters which preceded the incorporation of the Stationers in May, 1556, tending to put a stop to what were called heretical writings. So, however, it was, for they were to examine all books printed in England, and to burn and destroy all they found favourable to the Reformation. And thus poor Ernest's blocks and printing apparatus, the amusement of his leisure hours, brought him into trouble; and his master's being, like himself at the time of his flight, a member of John à Lasco's congregation, only added to the sanguinary intents of Bonner and Gardiner, or of others really and truly more cruel than they were, and more doggedly determined to root out the new learning. But the good men, as we have seen, had friends, and Hans Dhiel did not enter London again till he was well assured that he and his daughter and Ernest had found out a sure place of seclusion till they could escape together.

As hinted at before, this was not for some months. But, at last, Ernest's trusty friend of Coldharborough sought him out by the old Clock House at Westminster, and found him in the haunts which, in his younger days, he knew full well. Ludvig then and there told him that he had arranged all things for their departure from Queenhithe in Upper Thames Street (so well known from the old ballad, and Peele's chronicle play of 'King Edward I.') whence a faithful West of England corn-shipper would receive them on board his craft

and convey them at once over the water, he could not exactly state where, but, if possible, to the nearest port of France.

On receiving this information the first thing Ernest did was to communicate with Hans Dhiel, who had for some time bid farewell to his old friends in Shrewsbury, and had parted with the rector of Hanwood, not without tears. One pleasing trait of character he showed at this time, said my Talking Friend: a great web of flannel—over two hundred yards, so Molly Clayton, Ursula Evans, and Mary Overington reported it—the worthy merchant caused to be left at the old homestead of Cruck Meole, and with this only request, 'that if any trouble should betide his old and valued friend the rector of Hanwood, he hoped the good men of the old home by the Rea-side would see and help him out of it, for he had an impression in his mind that he should behold his face in the flesh no more'; as in good truth it turned out, for, much as he may have wished it, to the land of his adoption Hans Dhiel, returned not again. Good old man! He might have said in the words of the heathen dramatist,

> Nostrum officium nos facere æquum est:
> Neque id magis facimus, quam monet pietas.

Tidings were not long in reaching Hans Dhiel, who had been living now, for some little time, with his daughter Frederika (thanks to the good Girdler's guardianship of her), at the old town of *Kyningestan*, or Kingston-on-Thames, where he had removed from Guildford to be near the chaplain of St. Mary Magdalene's Hospital there, whom, next to the rector of Hanwood, he perhaps had the greatest respect and regard for, probably because he too was a favourer of the Reformation. Besides this he was the constant friend of the sick and needy, and that, at once, was the way to gain over the heart of the benevolent Hans Dhiel.

This good man, when in Shropshire, was always a great lover of the angle, and many a trout fell to his rod in the ponds of the Rea. And so he continued to amuse himself on the Thames, trolling for jack, for even in his early days there were not to be found there, or seldom, such lustrous spotted trouts as the Meole Brook abounded in. Early one morning,

for Hans was an early man to the last, and remembered the rhyming proverb of his native land—

Morgenstunde
Hat Gold im Munde:

that is, 'the morning hour hath gold in'ts mouth'—he observed that his footsteps were tracked, and that some one was in search of him. At first he was ill at ease, but he was presently set at ease by a friendly greeting, and through an old retainer of the hospital he was summoned back in haste from the river's side. On his return he understood the token he received, and prepared presently for his departure.

There were reasons why Frederika was well content to remain where she was, and her time at Kingston was not spent unhappily; but it was safer to depart, and within a week the little party found themselves, Ernest apparently taking the direction of all arrangements, safe and sound at Gravelines in France. Ernest, moreover, had so occupied his time in London, as to realise a large sum of ready money, so that there was no difficulty on this score. He was known to be entirely in his master's confidence, and, as they had the means of communicating not infrequently, the business could hardly be said to have been suspended—in fact, it was carried on till taken by other hands, who found it a most lucrative one. There are numerous instances on record of the way in which the merchant guilds were of the utmost importance in those days of fire, faggot, and blood.

Of his residence abroad, and indeed, of the time of Hans Dhiel's death, little comparatively is known. The following fragmentary scraps are all I have been able to pick up—detailed in the few and far between letters he wrote to his dear old friend at Hanwood. Hans Dhiel was not a man to forget his friends! His aspirations certainly were high and heavenly, but he was too practical a man to say,

I am but witness with my race,
The whispers from a heavenly place,
Once dropped among us, seem to chace
Rest with their prophet visitings.

Where he went from Gravelines I cannot say, but the next

that was heard of him was at Emden, where, as is well known, the Countess Anne of Oldenburg 'protected the German exiles when compelled to leave London on Mary's accession. Probably Hans thought to have found John à Lasco there, but it appears that he had left for Frankfort-on-the-Maine. It seems odd that he should not have known of his departure, considering his mercantile communications. But so it was.

However, there was a great attachment between the two, though Hans was much too sensible a man to trouble himself about the question of vestments, and that of sitting instead of kneeling at the Lord's Supper. He could not descend to trivialities in sacred subjects; but like the last of the old squires at Meole—the old homestead that he loved to visit—he brushed them away as he would the midges on a summer's eve as the speckled trout rose to his down hill-fly with a blob. A man was Hans to have endorsed the plain sensible words of Bishop Short: 'Obedience to general rules, in points in themselves indifferent, is of more consequence, and the neglect of it ought to be considered as a matter of conscience far more important than the disinclination of an individual to the use of any dress which the authority of the Church has established. Whether it was judicious in those who regulated these particulars and adopted this or that vestment, is a question which admits of discussion; but whether an individual minister is to conform to the orders of the Church is one on which a difference of sentiment cannot for a moment be entertained. It may be prudent on some occasions to overlook minutiæ of this sort; but if the question be brought to a point, the governors and governed should remember that obedience to constituted authority, provided that which is commanded be in no wise contrary to the revealed law of God, is a fundamental article of the Christian code.'

But to return. The attachment above alluded to it was which induced Hans Dhiel to follow à Lasco to Frankfort, where he found him busy as usual, and hearty as usual, but out of spirits, for he said: 'Those whom the fires of persecution and the faggots bound closer to each other, are clean fallen out by the way, and friends strike at friends, and wrangle about questions which never end in charity, which, as I have

learned long ago from that Holy Book, is the end of the commandment of God.'

And to me, indeed, it seems that very probably this was the real cause of à Lasco's returning to his beloved Poland, where he died in 1560. It was but a little while—a year or more —that Hans Dhiel enjoyed the society of this singlehearted man. I suspect he and Frederika, with Ernest, left Frankfort about the same time, for useless disputations were clear and quite and altogether contrary to their motives who were followers of peace and holiness. In one point only did Hans take any part at all, as far I could make out, and, as the old rector of Hanwood reported from one of his letters, which he read to the rector of Pontesbury more than once under the shadow of the Oak Tree. The point in question was this: he was much inclined to agree with Dr. Cox and Peter Martyr as regarded the use of the pure English forms (in some sort adopted from the reformed service of Herman, Archbishop of Cologne); certainly he disagreed entirely with Knox and his party in leaving Frankfort and going to Geneva in a huff. Indeed he could not understand the proceedings at all. And I bethought me of Burnet's remarks: 'Therefore in other contests, about the censuring of offences, which the congregation would not have in the hands of the ministers only, but would have it stand among the whole congregation. Upon these matters there arose great debates, and many pages were written on both sides, to the great grief of Parker and others, who lived privately in England, and to the scandal of the strangers, who were not a little offended to see a company of people fly out of their country for their consciences, and, instead of spending their time in fasting and prayer for their persecuted brothers at home, to fall into such quarrels about matters which themselves acknowledged were not the substantials of religion nor points of conscience, in which certainly they began the breach who departed from that way of worship which they acknowledged was both lawful and good. But there followed too much animosity on both sides, which were the seeds of all those differences, that have since distracted the church. They who reflected on the contests that the Novatians raised both at Rome and Carthage, in Cyprian's time, and

the heats the Donatists brought into the African churches, soon after the persecution was over, found somewhat parallel both to those schisms now during the persecution, and to those afterwards raised when it was over.'

There is a letter of Young to Bullinger, dated Basel, August 5, 1557, from which we next get a clue to Hans Dhiel having resided there. In this Young states: 'A large portion of the English are remaining there. The rest will go to Aarau, unless more eligible terms are offered them at Vevay. I went up to Aarau with them last week, and easily obtained leave of residence for them among the citizens themselves, but we could not meet with suitable houses and apartments for more than seven families. The church of St. Ursula is appropriated to them and licence to engage in *the manufacture of wooll* in spite of the opposition of some of the more wealthy of the inhabitants. God be praised.' The words marked in italics are those to be observed particularly, because, subsequent to this, as my Talking Friend told me on the rector of Hanwood's information, Hans Dhiel was engaged here in the custom of his trade or calling, he having stated in one of his letters that the woollens of Basel were not to be compared with the flannels of the Welsh and of Shrewsbury, adding that 'the good people on the Rea-side would most assuredly turn up their noses at them.' It was in this way that the industrious habits of Hans still added to his means, and the faithful old German retainer, who had turned up amongst the exiles, was as busy and as useful as ever. The pleasant thing to report is that all that was made in this way was thrown into a common fund for the support of others. And my Talking Friend added, 'I have no doubt but that Hans greatly improved the manufactures of Basel, for he was a clear-headed, intelligent man, full of kindness and benevolence, and with a Heart of Oak!' Whether or not, it was the exile's pleasant home, one

> where he
> Such noble welcome found, as not to be
> Imagin'd, but by grateful souls that know
> The strength of Courtesie.'

Meanwhile, however, it is asked, 'Where was the faithful Ernest Arnfeldt?'

At the present time he too was at Basel, highly respected and beloved, but to none so dear as to his old master and Frederika, his almost adopted child ; and to the old, undemonstrative, but trusty old German, who followed him like a shadow. He was not, however, a man to eat the bread of idleness, and although I cannot quite reconcile the dates historically, I evidently made out that he knew Fox the Martyrologist then, when he corrected or superintended the press of Oporinus there. Strype in his 'Memorials of Cranmer' gives an account of divers of the exiles there who were writers with this introduction, illustrating what is said above : 'Many of the fugitives took up their residence at Basel upon two reasons : one was, because the people of that city were especially very kind and courteous unto such English as came thither for shelter ; the other, because those who were of slender fortunes might have employment in the printing houses there, the printers in Basel in this age having the reputation of exceeding all others of that art throughout Germany, for the exactness and elegancy of their printing. And they rather chose Englishmen for the overseers and correctors of their presses, being noted for the most careful and diligent of all others. Whereby many poor scholars made a shift to subsist in these hard times. Indeed many of these exiles assisted in promoting of learning and religion by publishing to the world their own and other men's writings.'

As early as November 25, 1556, there is a letter from Fox, dated Basel, to Boniface Amerbach, the son of a famous printer there, whom he calls 'most honourable lord rector and ornament of the university.' Putting one thing and another together there could be no doubt but that Ernest had taken to his blocks and types again, surrendering to the faithful German his former situation as superintendent in matters of business. Loving and beloved, he held a grand position, though the lowliest of men in his own estimation. It is always true that '*Before honour is humility*' ; nor is it for nothing that these words are twice set down in the Book of those wise Proverbs :

> True comeliness, which nothing can impair,
> Dwells in the mind ; all else is vanity and glare

I make out further that Ernest and Hans Dhiel were at Strasburg, no doubt with Frederika, in 1558 and 1559, as they made mention in their letters to the old rector of Hanwood of Thomas Sampson and Edwin Sandys being there. After that, from any communication of my Talking Friend, I do not trace them at this particular time, though they were certainly at Augsburg later than this, and at Ratisbon, as letters were received from those places by the Drapers' Company in Shrewsbury.

The last letter the old rector of Hanwood received was after the accession of Elizabeth, and the letter was written with great joy and in exuberant spirits, dated Ghent, from which the good man inferred that Hans had returned to the land of his nativity; and he added with a sigh, 'So doth the hunted hare return to her form.' Two centuries and a half later the author of the 'Deserted Village' thus expressed the same thought—

> And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
> Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
> I still had hoped, my long vexations past,
> Here to return, and die at home at last!

Not six months after this came a letter with heavy tidings written in Frederika's own hand, and with all the best feelings of a woman. 'Her father was departed, he was gone before and amongst the blessed dead in Christ, he rejoiced for the consolation when it arrived at last, and for the uprisen Light of the Reformation which was to enlighten the people.' She added that 'he died at Utrecht, and some of his last words were, "Let the rector of Hanwood know that I remembered him to the last."' It was written down in the postscript that 'she and Ernest had taken up their abode at Utrecht for the present, that, till her grief was full, she might be close to the dust of her parent, so deeply and so dearly beloved.' And I bethought me of Drayton's lines—

> The depth of woe with words we hardly sound,
> Sorrow is so insensibly profound.

And another year passed on, and Elizabeth was firmly

seated on her throne, and the Reformation proceeded, and the exiles were at home again.

As far as I could make out, it must have been towards the end of the year 1559, or in the year 1560, that a stranger arrived at Utrecht and, after much inquiry, found out the residence of Ernest Arnfeldt and his *protégée* Frederika, and it was evident at once to the faithful Ernest that he was no unwelcome visitor; neither was he unknown to him. I cannot record his name, though I have taken some pains to ascertain it. He, too, it appears, had been communicated with on the death of Hans Dhiel; and as Frederika then thanked him for past kindnesses, so now she gave

> such thanks, as best
> The silent eloquence of looks exprest.

The visitor was no other person than the chaplain of the hospital of St. Mary Magdalene at Kingston—the good man who had been so kind to Hans Dhiel and Frederika in their troubles, and had interested her so much in the history of the place, telling her how Egbert (A.D. 838) convened his council there, and detailing to her all the legends of the Royal Stone, from which, and not from *tun* (indicating the royal manor), he constantly maintained that the place took its name, and of which I will only add now from that beautiful book 'The Book of the Thames': 'It had long remained neglected, though not unknown, among disregarded heaps of *débris* in the new courtyard, when it occurred to some zealous and intelligent antiquaries that so venerable a relic of remote ages was entitled to some show of respect. It was consequently removed from its degraded position, planted in the centre of the town, and enclosed by a suitable iron railing.' Of ancient coronation stones something has been said in an earlier chapter.

Women are quick and sensitive and penetrating; but if Frederika knew that she had won the heart of this good man and favourer of the Reformation, she never divulged her secret. Perhaps it was one of those heart-secrets which women cling to so lovingly and pertinaciously, hardly admitting their hearts' desire to themselves. So exquisitely sensitive are the finest feelings of a woman!

However, as Shakespeare says, 'There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered'; and on the chaplain's arrival Ernest had no doubts on *his* mind; but the object of the visit was as clear as the light of day, nor was it an unpleasant one to him, for the worthy man was one to whom he had taken greatly, and the more so as he was fond of his own craft, and no mean scholar in the books which, up to that time, had been printed in London. Perhaps there was no one who knew *so much* of 'Julian Notary,' of whose typographical biography now is known *so little*, as the chaplain of St. Mary Magdalene's did.

Little remains to be added to these 'Specialities.' Those who have known each other so well in adversity, and when they were beleaguered with danger—

> Trembling hearts that fear the morrow;

were not long in wooing. It was clear enough why the chaplain had made this journey to Utrecht, and Frederika had no misgivings as to attaching herself to her own and her father's friend. Clearly the two had loved long and well, and their union was the delight of Ernest Arnfeldt's heart. A month or more they remained in Holland, and then returned together to Kingston. There old Hans Dhiel's friends soon contrived to find them out, and the old MS. chronicles say that the Hospital was never more blessed than while they superintended its concerns. There were no violent and sudden changes, which so often unsettle men's minds and disturb their peace; but the pure doctrines of the Reformed Church were quietly substituted where superstition had encroached, and so much had been taught the inmates of the Hospital before, that they had little else to learn now than to follow onwards in the holy course of life which the chaplain and his beloved Frederika practised day by day till their lives' end. Of none might it have been said more truly than of this faithful pair,

> There are in this loud, stunning tide
> Of human care and crime,
> With whom the melodies abide
> Of the everlasting chime;

Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

Ernest Arnfeldt returned with them and did no little service to the Hospital in the management of its exchequer. To his life's end—following the bias of his earlier years, though he had no liking for the Stationers' Company, incorporated May 3 and 4, 1559, of Philip and Mary—he was a frequenter of the *columnæ*, or *stalls*, in St. Paul's Churchyard, for so we may still call those *signs* in which he greatly delighted, and many of which remained till quite the middle of the last century. Indeed, it was not till after the great fire of London that the body of the Stationers betook themselves to Little Britain and Paternoster Row, where within my recollection (perhaps now) the sign of the Bible and the Crown was to be seen let into the story corner above the window of Rivington's house. What better sign could have been held out anywhere?

But who is this, by years
Bowed, but erect in heart?

For many years an old grey-headed man, bent like a willow, was seen about these haunts of the booksellers periodically, and received courteously by all. One winter's day he was taken ill by a stationer's sign, and was led in by the owner of the shop, as we should call it, who knew him well. He had only breath left in him to give God and his kind host thanks, laid his head upon an open Bible in the room, uttered the words '*Dominus illuminatio mea*,' and expired.

Feelingly and thoughtfully the tidings were borne to Kingston, and Frederika and her husband mourned for Arnfeldt (for it was none other than their beloved Ernest) as Christians mourn for the dead in the Lord—hopefully, but with many tears nevertheless, for a sunbeam had been quenched on their path.

For many years these simple words remained on a slab, to be found no more:—

ERNEST ARNFELDT.
UNICE AMATUS.
FREDERIKA MŒRENS POSUIT.
A.D. 1576.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LAST TUDOR.

When the villain crams his chest,
Gold is the canker of the breast;
'Tis avarice, insolence, and pride,
And every shocking vice beside.
But when to virtuous hearts 'tis given,
It blesses, like the dew of heaven;
Like heaven, it hears the orphans' cries,
And wipes the tears from widows' eyes.
GAY'S *Fables: The Miser and Plutos.*

Pigeat sane peccare, sed pœniteri non pigeat. Pudeat periclitari, sed non pudeat liberari. Quis naufrago tabulam, ne evadat, eripiet? Quis sanandis vulneribus invidebit?—ST. PACIAN, *De Catholico Nomine, Epist.* i. 258 B, apud Galland. tom. vii.

Like as the errors of the clock be revealed by the constant course of the sun, even so the errors of the Church are revealed by the everlasting and infallible Word of God.—JEWEL, *Works*, vol. i. 127. Ed. Clar.

Those things which degenerate are so much the worse by how much the better they had been had they retained that primitive rectitude which God and Nature put into them.—FARINDON'S *Serm.* ii. 335.

Nor be dismayed
Because the dead are by;
They were as we, our little day
O'erspent, and we shall be as they.
Harold the Dauntless, canto vi. 8.

NOT a few people were inclined to say, with Richard Niccols, in the 'Mirror for Magistrates,' on the accession of Elizabeth, and none more ready than the good rector of Hanwood, and his worthy friend, the rector of Pontesbury:

Even as that morning star that doth display
Her golden tresses in th' orientall skie,
Brings happy tidings of approaching day
To them that long in bed do restlesse lie,
Expecting comfort from the sun's bright eye;

So our *Eliza* did blest tidings bring
Of joy to those whom sad distresse did sting.[1]

But, perhaps, considering the man, the passage following, with which Hooker concludes the Fourth Book of the 'Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,' is as remarkable as any:

'And sith thus far we have proceeded in opening the things that have been done, let not the principal doers themselves be forgotten. When the ruins of the house of God (that house which, consisting of religious souls, is most immediately the temple of the Holy Ghost) were become, not in His sight alone but in the eyes of the whole world, so exceeding great, that very superstition began even to feel itself too far grown: the first that, with us, made way to repair the decays thereof by beheading superstition, was King Henry the Eighth. The son and successor of which famous king, as we know, was Edward the Saint, in whom (for so by the event we may gather) it pleased God, righteous and just, to let England see what a blessing sin and iniquity would not suffer it to enjoy. Howbeit that which the wise man hath said concerning Enoch (whose days were, though many in respect of ours, yet scant as three in comparison of theirs with whom he lived), the same to that admirable child may be applied: *Though he departed this world soon, yet fulfilled he much time.*[2] But what ensued? That work which the one had in such sort begun, and the other so far proceeded in, was in short space so overthrown as if almost it had never been: till such time as that God, whose property is to show His "mercies," then greatest when they are nearest to be utterly despaired of, caused in the depth of discomfort and darkness a most glorious star to arise, and on his head settled the crown, whom himself had kept as a lamb from the slaughter of those bloody times; that the expression of his goodness in her own deliverance might cause her merciful disposition to take so much the more delight in saving others, whom the like necessity should press. What in this behalf hath been done towards nations abroad, the parts of Christendom most afflicted can testify. That which especially

[1] *England's Eliza*, vol. iii. p. 829. [2] Sap. iv. 13.

concerneth ourselves in the present matter we treat of in the state of reformed religion, a thing at her coming to the crown even raised, as it were, by miracle from the dead ; a thing which we so little hoped to see, that even they which beheld it done scarcely believed their own senses at first beholding. Yet being brought to pass, thus many years it hath continued, standing by no other worldly mean but that one only hand which erected it.'

So spoke Hooker, in his solemn and well-sustained style, of Henry VIII. that famous king, of Edward the Saint, and that most glorious star Elizabeth—

> A virgin, that was Ladie of the Deepe.

And my Talking Friend assured me, on the authority of the old rector, who lived through the first twenty years of her reign, that there were visible improvement and progress, not only in the country at large, and in the old town of Shrewsbury, but throughout the whole valley of the Rea, from Caux Castle downwards. In the words of the old poem, which contains so strange a mixture—

> Her settled Faith, fixt in the highest heaven,
> Remained firm unto her life's last date,
> Nor her undaunted spirit could be driven,
> At any time, one jot thereof t' abate,
> By Spaine's stern threats, and Rome's pernitious hate.

Somewhere about this time, said my Talking Friend, old Edward del Wartyr used to be a constant visitor at the old homestead of Meole. He was a lineal descendant of old Degory del Watur, and was a Protestant and a staunch Churchman. Why my Talking Friend so well remembered him was that he constantly declaimed, beneath his shade, against those hungry courtiers who, from Henry VIII.'s days, had devoured the revenues of the monasteries and other religious houses of the land. He it was, continued my faithful chronicler, that was so delighted with the foundation of Edward VI.'s *Libera Schola*, or free-school, in Shrewsbury, and lent a hand till his dying day to support it. No one knew better than he did the true meaning of the words *Libera Schola*, a school

that is 'exempt by royal Grant from the superiority of another foundation, such as a Chapter or College'; for, had he not lived the whole of his early days in the worst days of Romanism, and had he not seen its worst effects, though he was the first to allow that had it not been for the monasteries and the libraries then, learning might almost have died out? Nevertheless, though he did not live to know of the augmentation by Elizabeth, his heart was in the work, and he saw the great benefit that must eventually accrue to town and county, as indeed it did, and in no long time.

And the first thing which my Talking Friend impressed upon me was the great advance which the country enjoyed by the better administration of the law. 'He could remember,' he said, the time when, in the open valley of the Rea, both life and property were insecure; indeed, in his time-honoured father's days, might was right, and from Montgomery to Caux, and from Caux Castle to the Meole ford, every man did pretty much as he liked. Happily these days were gone by!' And I bethought me of the words of excellent Bishop Andrewes in his sermon on the Spittle: 'To a poor man, if he have a cause in hand, there is nothing cometh to mind but God and innocency, and the goodness of his cause. There is his strength, and that is "the horn of his salvation" (Psalm xviii. 1). But the rich, saith Amos, hath gotten him alms in his own strength; as in our modern version, "Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?" (Amos vi. 13).' As Bishop Andrewes was born in 1555, only three years before Elizabeth came to the throne, and survived James I. by a year, it is to be feared that there was plenty of injustice rife still, notwithstanding my Talking Friend's hopeful opinion. No doubt even in Elizabeth's days it might have been said—

> I have often heard of Lydford law,
> How in the morn they hang and draw,
> And sit in judgment after.

It was, as well as I could make out, in the very first year of Elizabeth's reign, that my Talking Friend reported how the rector of Hanwood had been disturbed in his mind by

some improperly printed paper or another which had been put into his hands—something, probably, like to what was afterwards called a *Broadside*, an invaluable collection of which still remains in the Pepysian Library—and of which he spoke in no measured terms of censure; however, with the alarm of Sir Thomas More and many others on its first invention. A sentence from Hearne will very nearly express his thoughts on the matter: 'Though honest men will rightly judge of such performances, and be by no means biassed by them, yet they bear no proportion to others, who will be swayed by such books, and will greedily imbibe the principles in them, and instil them in their children and dependents.' The alarm was, certainly, not unnatural; there is no rose without its thorn, but it is a rose still! And one may say with the old poet—

Omnia perversas possunt corrumpere mentes,
Stant tamen illa suis omnia tuta locis.

There are no great historical events during Elizabeth's long and glorious reign of forty-five years in which the old town of Shrewsbury is much concerned; for the augmentation of the school was a local matter. Local matters, however, were those which were sure to reach the valley of the Rea first—historical ones concerning the kingdom at large, by degrees—and it will be seen from the sequel that my Talking Friend was by no means an Oak lacking information. There can be no doubt that he delighted in hearing the mixed information beneath his hospitable shade, and of him most certainly it could not have been said with truth—

Curiosus nemo est, quin sit malevolus.

The incident which follows is a local matter, but it gives a date, which from the Rolls of Accounts must have been *anno* 1561. It was, indeed, a very simple matter, but it was mentioned under the Old Oak that their neighbour, Mr. Onslow was gone, with others, to Bridgnorth, 'to knowe, my l'rd p'sident hys pleasure, where the cownsell could come together.' Onslow not being far off from the old homestead, it was natural enough that this conversation should have taken place, and everything which concerned Sir Henry

Sidney, President of the Marches of Wales, the father of the afterwards-renowned Sir Philip, educated at the school, was a matter of no small import throughout the valley of the Rea. Indeed, at this time, and for many years after, Sir Henry's name, both as President of Wales and Deputy of Ireland, was as much in repute as the Duke of Wellington's was in our childhood; and although Elizabeth was sometimes out of humour with him, insomuch so that he wrote to Cecil demanding his recall, yet she too, says Mr. Froude, when Shane was conquered and Ireland reduced, 'became gradually gracious, condescended to acknowledge that he had recovered Ireland for her crown, and thanked him for his services.'

About this time—as I picked up from the Old Oak's conversation—a new character was introduced into the vale—a Londoner, by name Philip Hewson. He too, like our old friend Hans Dhiel, was a merchant, concerned with the Welsh flannel trade and with the Drapers' Company, and having known Hans intimately, was an acceptable guest always at the old homestead of Meole. For many years during the life of the old rector, so often spoken of, and after his death, he was the regular purveyor of news, and it was he who first gave full information of that great national loss, the burning of St. Paul's, June 4, 1561. It was in the month of July next following that he brought with him the sad tidings, and he was glad, he said, that his friend Hans Dhiel had not witnessed the appalling sight. He had come upon his own business, but being a lover of the angle he found time to spend a week at Meole and to fish the valley of the Rea. The good merchant was as fond of his gun as he was of his rod, and was in the habit of paying a winter's visitation. On the latter occasions he would wander all the way to Marton Pool in company with a well-known inhabitant of the vale called Dick Glover, who knew the haunts of all fish and fowl, and who spoke of him as a wonderful specimen of a Londoner, for Dick did not know how he constantly frequented the Essex marshes, and was known there as a dead shot. From Marton Pool they were sure to come back well loaded with ducks and widgeon, and now and then a teal, with snipes

and plovers, and not unfrequently wild geese. On one occasion these two worthies (for on these excursions there was an admitted equality) returned with a whistling swan, to the wonderment of all the people at Meole and Hanwood.

On one of these visits it was that he explained to the master of the old homestead the benefits which must accrue from the reform of the currency, adding that some of the old coin was no better than the dumps which children played with, or than the leaden slugs with which he and Dick Glover brought down their game: so contemptuously did he speak of the debased state of the coin of the realm. Of nothing, however, said my Talking Friend, did he ever speak with so much emotion as of the burning of St. Paul's, which he had seen with his eyes, and never should forget![1]

No doubt, as old Stow said, and as Philip Hewson felt, 'a lamentable sight, and pitiful remembance to the beholders

[1] I give the following as a note:—

OLD ST. PAUL'S.

One of Master Henry Farley's poetical effusions on 'St. Paul's Church; her Bill for the Parliament,' contains a view of the Cathedral and cross, which is given in Mr. Rye's *England as seen by Foreigners*. Farley was a great advocate for its repair in the reign of James, nothing having been done to it since it was struck by lightning in 1561. The etching referred to dates 1621, 4to.

To which is added by Mr. Rye:—

'There is a curious folding picture on panel in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries, which was printed by John Gipleyn, at the expence of Farley, in 1616. It represents an ideal procession of King James and his court to St. Paul's, and the preaching at the cross. This picture was executed in anticipation of a royal visit, which, however, did not actually take place till 1620, when King James attended in great state, on Sunday, March 26. The view of the Cathedral, with the curious old houses near it, is valuable and interesting.'

Query.—Are both views combined in this etching? On the forefront is: *Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good.*—Ps. cxxii. 9.

'Blessed may that preacher be
That will pray and preach for me.'

Poor Farley got into the Ludgate prison for his schemes and importunities. Amongst his other lines these are given:—

'My love to Paule's is such
That if I had an Angel's pen, I'd write ten times as much.'

thereof!'[1] I could wish, whilst I refer the reader to our old Drama generally, and to Earle's 'Micro-cosmographie'[2] in particular, that Mr. Froude had not written the words which follow: 'The Cathedral of St. Paul's, the world's wonder, which under Edward had been desecrated into a public lounge and stock exchange and a stable, which Mary and Pole had purified, and which was again sinking into neglect and profanation, stood a charred and roofless ruin.'[3]

It is remarkable that the old rector of Hanwood—*vir bonus atque probus* old Ennius might have called him—after Hans Dhiel's death, said very little about the constant attempts of the Romanist party to regain their lost ground. Amongst them he had many friends, and they lived happily together as men may live, though he was known to be the constant friend of the Reformation, and laboured to the end of his days to further the spread of it. I suspect he was gathered to his fathers before the Bull of Pius V., April 25, 1570, pronounced the Queen excommunicated and deposed. I can imagine, from what my Talking Friend always said of him, how his indignation would have been roused at such fulminations as those of Pius V. or Sixtus V.

Again, the literature of the age belongs to the history of the age, and although unprecedented, perhaps, as well as unrivalled (certainly in this nation), it was a matter which scarcely reached the bubbling shallows of the Rea. Pretty much all that was known was from the Council of the Marches at Ludlow (it is a remarkable coincidence that of the Masque of Comus), and through those connected with the Free School at Shrewsbury. What used to come from the Abbot's Par-

[1] In Stow's words: 'On Wednesday, the 4th of June, between 4 and 5 of the clock in the after noone, the steeple of Paule's in London, being fired by lightning, burst forth (as it seemed to the beholders) two or three yards beneathe the foote of the crosse, and from thence burnt down the speere to the stonework and bed, so terribly, that within the space of four houres the same steeple, with the roofes of the churche, so much as was timber or otherwise combustible, were consumed, which was a lamentable sight, and pitiful remembrance to the beholders thereof.'—*Chronicle*, Anno 1561, p. 647.

[2] No. xli. p. 116., ed. Bliss. Earle says very politely, 'It is the general mint of all famous lies, which are here, like the legends of Popery, first coined and stamped in the Church.' *Ib.*

[3] *See* vol. viii. pp. 344, 346.

lour, so often alluded to in these pages, now came from thence. It was at Ludlow that visitors spoke of Shakespeare, and Spenser, and Lord Brooke, and Sir Philip Sidney's learned friends, and there it was that the names of Archbishop Parker and Jewel and Hooker were first known in these parts. Very little was it that the Rea knew! But if the valley had not much knowledge—it had its kindly people; and as the poet said—

> Covering with moss the dead's unclosed eye,
> The little redbreast teacheth charity.

The next incident my Talking Friend spoke of must have been in 1565, which I likewise arrive at through the Town Accounts. Two matters, it would appear, called the venerable rector of Hanwood in haste from home. The first was a parish case, about which he was very anxious, for it appeared that one John Davies, of Hanwood, whom he knew to be an innocent man, had been laid hold on and unjustly locked up in the porter's lodge of the Council House, and he must see to his release, which he did at once, and, as it appears, successfully, for my Talking Friend said he returned home that same night, which the rector of Hanwood did not. What he related to me was this: there was a great contest in the old town for the office of Bailiff, and a friend of the rector, Richard Purcell, in whom he took more than a common interest, was elected. There was, however, great disagreement amongst the electors, who were locked up in the Election House for 'twenty-six hourres without meete and drynke' because they could not agree. This was the cause of the good man's delay; but being an early bird, as the country people speak, he was up betimes, and on his return home by six in the morning; for, as he said in passing under the Old Oak to tell the news at Meole, he 'heard Halliwell's knell from St. Julian's tower quite plain when he was beyond the Red-sand Hill'—no doubt what is now called the Boat-House Bank.

I pick out from our historians that this John Halliwell was bailiff in 1558, and the rectory of St. Julian's (so called at that time) had become his property. 'He was then an inhabitant of the Parish, and in the following year ordained that the Church bell should ring every morning at three of

the clocke' (four, another says) 'and toll at six, twelve, and six at night; the which, says our Chronicle, "ys a goodly knowledge for the inhabitants and strangers, and the whyche ys callys this day Hallywell's knyll."' Private clocks and watches must have been rare at this time, and the custom, therefore, was one generally useful to all the inhabitants. It is Young that says—

> we take no note of time
> But from its loss. To give it then a tongue
> Is wise in man.

But in many places it may have had its particular use, and that a benevolent one, like the bell on the Inchcape Rock, so well known from Southey's ballad. And hence it was that Archdeacon Owen said, 'The custom, which has long been discontinued, is said to have arisen from the necessity of directing travellers by the sound of bells during the darkness of the night, when the great part of the county was wild and uninclosed, and the roads little better than obscure paths. It is still usual in dark and foggy weather to ring the bell of the little church of Aber in Carnarvonshire, to prevent travellers who cross the dangerous roads between that village and Beaumaris from wandering very widely from the line they ought to keep.'

Evidently, however, Archdeacon Owen did not think this the origin of the custom here, and it appears from the old MS. Chronicle that at the hours of 'XI of the clocke at noone and V of the clocke at nyght, then should a bell toll in St. Marie's Churche, to gyve serten knowledge to the schollars in the free schoole there, and also for the inhabitants.' How an old Shrewsbury boy does like to hear anything of his old School—

> Like service bells a long way off!

'The *couvre feu*, used to extinguish the fire at the sound of a warning bell, was an implement of metal, which covered in the ashes caked together on the hearth, and brought them in a heap to the back of the grate, and so extinguished them.'

From Barking Tower, 'the bell rang out at noonday and evening, sometimes to the great safety of travellers on winter

nights. There are records of gifts to the monastery of many who were guarded over the lonely marsh lands through the winter fogs by the tolling of the curfew alone. In the old time the road-way between this place and London was singularly disagreeable ; the land was only partially drained ; the pathways were few, and they were constructed on raised compartments, which made them dangerous to travellers on dark nights.'

I do not recollect that my Talking Friend, except in terms of great respect, ever mentioned the old rector of Hanwood after the last incident recorded, nor did he ever speak of any subsequent rector in like terms. He was evidently much attached to him, and considered him an excellent man. Being 'Heart of Oak' himself, he had a great idea that everyone should fill his station well.

And, for the truth must be spoken, though the parish of Hanwood was well looked to generally, and the residents at the Old Homestead contrived that it should be, it was far otherwise with the many parishes throughout the land. Nothing, indeed, could be more deplorable than the neglect in some parts of the country ; but, without defending individuals, we must still bear in mind that the Church was iniquitously robbed and pillaged. Edward, says Bishop Short, always honest in his statements, as he was in his conduct when censor of Christ Church—Edward was too weak to resist the avarice of those who governed, and Mary rather enriched than robbed the Establishment ; but Elizabeth laid her hands on all that she could grasp, though for the sake of keeping up appearances, she restored some small portion in foundations connected with education. She acted towards the property of the Church with no more prudence or forbearance than she did towards that of the crown, and in both seemed to look no further than the lifehold interest she possessed in it. The improvident bargains made by churchmen themselves tended to impoverish the revenues of the Establishment ; but for one case on record where the clergy were to blame, several might be found where the interference of the Court obliged them to give away, in a legal form, what belonged to their successors.

No doubt, Bishop Short speaks as favourably as he can, but Mr. Froude's view is a much more stern one, and, indeed, within my recollection, Elizabeth's remonstrance to Parker might very well have been repeated, and that too without Thomas Churchyard's censure on the Worlde in his 'Warres in Flaunders,' imprinted 1578:

> For evil tongues do ytch so sore,
> They must be rubbing still
> Against the teeth that should hold fast
> The clapper of the mill.

'It breedeth,' said Elizabeth in a remonstrance which she addressed to Archbishop Parker, 'no small offence and scandal to see and consider upon the one part the curiosity and cost bestowed by all sorts of men upon their private houses; and on the other part the unclean and negligent order and spare keeping of the houses of prayer, by permitting open decays and ruins of coverings of walls and windows, and by appointing unmeet and unseemly tables with foul cloths for the communion of the sacrament, and generally leaving the place of prayer desolate of all cleanliness and of meet ornament for such a place, when by it might be known a place provided for divine service.' Very painful is it to hear Mr. Froude say, 'The Church of England was doing little to make the Queen or the country enamoured of it. Torn up as it had been by the very roots, and but lately replanted, its hanging boughs and drooping foliage showed that as yet it had taken no root in the soil, and there seemed too strong a likelihood that, notwithstanding its ingenious framework and comprehensive formulas it would wither utterly away.'

Happily, as I said, this was not the state of things at Hanwood and by the old homestead at Meole, where the venerable rector before his death rejoiced that Albion's Mistress

> The world's usurped rule from Rome did rend.

Changes there were constantly, and ups and downs, as the country people speak on the Rea-side, but, on the whole, the light shone brighter, if sometimes eclipsed.

> Just as we see the sunne sometimes shine cleare
> Amidst the skie, then muffle his bright face
> In sable clouds, and straight againe appeare.

The cultivation of the soil was decidedly on the advance, and between Hanwood and Shrewsbury what was not meadow land was under tillage, allowance being made for the wide hedgerows of the time to supply the 'ingle nook' with, and which, in Sussex, under the name of 'Shaws,' have only just disappeared. The consequence was that in these parts there was no difficulty about labour, and the labour market, as we now call it, was well supplied. The reading out of the rate of wages in the old church of Hanwood was simply a form required by the law. Every man knew his worth at the various times of the year without the sound of the same bell to tell it him, and a pleasant custom existed throughout the vale of each one's coming to his neighbour's help in time of need, the result of which was that crops were rarely spoiled. Chamberlayn must have witnessed something of this sort when he wrote in his 'Pharonida,'

> whilst with such haste, as new
> Shorn meadows, when approaching storms are nigh,
> Tired labourers huddle up.

It was about this time, and towards the end of the year, if my Talking Friend remembered right, that one night the whole heavens seemed on fire, and the valley of the Rea from one end of it to the other, was in the greatest alarm, possible. No doubt it was the effect of a grand 'Aurora Borealis,' and it is remarkable that old Stow mentions one as occurring on October 7, *anno* 1564: 'At eight of the clock at night the north parts of the element seemed to be covered with flames of fire, proceeding toward the middle of the firmament, where, after it had stayed nigh one houre, it descended West, and all the same night (being the next after the change of the moon) seemed as light as if it had beene day.'

In those days a great fire was reported to have occurred at Oswestry, which caused great alarm, as the loss of cloth and flannel then concerned many in Shrewsbury. It was

made known at Hanwood by William Bellingham, who had relatives at Selattyn, close by. It is said to have consumed as many as two hundred houses. In all probability, some of the London clothiers sustained losses in it, as it is mentioned by Stow as happening on April 22, 1567. It is remarkable that he retains the old pronunciation of the name, calling it 'the town of *Ossestrie* in Wales.'

In the latter end of the year (as I make out) of 1571 Philip Hewson, the London cloth and flannel merchant, was at Shrewsbury and Meole. The Master of the old homestead there always took great interest in all that this worthy man had to tell of the Metropolis. On the present occasion his chief news was about the building of the Exchange, the first stone of which was laid June 7, 1566, and finished in the next year, 1567. It was reopened January 23, 1571, by Queen Elizabeth in person, who by herald and sound of the trumpet proclaimed it always hereafter to be called 'THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.' Philip was present on the reopening, and said it was a pleasant thing to have some place to meet in instead of dodging up and down the Lombard Street, and in very mixed company, like hungry men used to do in 'Dowle's Isle.' No doubt he had painfully felt all that Stow describes in his 'Chronicle':

'Merchants and tradesmen, as well English as strangers, for their general making of bargains, contracts, and commerce, did usually meete twice every day in Lombard Streete (like as they do now in the Royal Exchange), but forasmuch as their meetinge was then unpleasant and troublesome by reason of walking and talking in an open narrow streete, which streete beareth the name of the Lombarde merchants, which of former times used to walk there at their usual houres, being there constrained either to endure all extremities of weather, viz. heat and cold, snow and raine, or else to shelter themselves in shoppes, for redresse whereof, upon good advice, the citizens of London bought divers times houses and small tenements, in Cornehill, and pulled them downe and made the grounde faire and plaine to build upon, the charges whereof cost them above five thousand pound, and then the Citie gave that ground to SIR THOMAS GRESHAM

to the end he should build a Burse or faire place for the Assembly of Merchants, like to that of Antwerpe, and the sayd SIR THOMAS GRESHAM layd the first stone thereof, the seaventh of June, and the whole worke was fully finished in November the next yeare 1567, and then the Merchants held their meetings at their Burse, for it was generally so called till the Queene came thither, which was the three and twentieth of January following, and then by her own mouth caused it to be proclaimed that it should for ever be called the Royal Exchange, and the next year following Lombard Street was quite forsaken.'

This able-minded merchant, the crest of whose family was the well-known grasshopper, died suddenly November 21, 1579, on his return from the Exchange. Heywood's lines tell of Elizabeth's Proclamation :

> Proclaim through every high street of the city
> This place be no longer called a Burse,
> But since the building's stately, fair, and strange,
> Be it for ever called the ROYAL EXCHANGE.

In return for Philip Hewson's London news on this occasion, he is told of 'a strange kind of earth moving,' which had recently occurred in Herefordshire, which must have attracted a good deal of notice, as it is likewise mentioned by Stow. The account of it (which seems like one of a moving bog in Ireland) was brought to the Rea-side by a friend of the good man of the homestead at Meole, who lived at Pitchford. He had just returned from Ludlow, where he heard of it, and where it was said that six-and-twenty acres were destroyed.

I was much amused one day at the account my Talking Friend gave of a well-known character in those days, who had left the vale early and had spent much of his time in Canterbury and Rochester. He was a big, broad, strong-set fellow, originally a blacksmith at Minsterley, by name Gilbert Tugwell, and a great pugilist. How he had spent his time no one knew and few cared, but it was quite clear that in a worldly point of view he was much better off than when he left ; and being a wag and a humourist, and without any

viciousness in his nature, his company was always acceptable.

How my Talking Friend came to mention him was because of a curious sort of a proclamation he made under his boughs on a summer's evening for the amusement of the people, and he called it 'The Oath of a Picador.' No doubt, in his wanderings he must have been present at some challenge, or combat, or Darraine of Battel, and have picked up the words which convulsed with laughter the natives of the valley. Infinitely amused they must have been to have heard Tugwell declare, on the word of a Christian, that he was neither witch nor warlock, conjuror nor sorcerer. It may amuse the reader to see the original Oath of a Picador, as given by Stow in this reign.

'This heare, you Justices, that I have this day neither eate, dranke, nor have upon me either bone, stone, nor glasse, or any inchantment, sorceric, or witchcraft, through which the power of God might be diminished, and the devil's power encreased, and that my appeal is true. So helpe me GOD and His Saints, and by His Booke.'

Evidently Gilbert Tugwell must have had a fund of broad humour!

The rector of Pontesbury, whose name has frequently been mentioned in these pages, survived his old friend the rector of Hanwood for some years, and frequently visited the old homestead at Meole on his way to or from Shrewsbury. Always a constant friend to the Reformation, he was in the habit, when he could find time, of attending the exercises there. Usually he attended the one at St. Chad's, and as he spoke of the Lord President, Sir Henry Sidney, being there with the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, we gain the date of 1573, when they had to look 'to an order and Reformation in the churches, accordinge to the Queen's Majestie's injunctions.' These 'Exercises,' as they were called, succeeded the well-known 'Prophesyings' which began at Northampton about 1370, and were suppressed by the Queen, May 7, 1577. The names are, however, frequently confounded. The rector of Pontesbury always contended that they were of great use, but he lamented the strong party feeling of the day, even in

Shrewsbury, which led to their abuse. Whether Elizabeth was well advised or no may be a question. No doubt she would have said with the man in the play—

> Quanta mea sapientia est,
> E malis multis malum quod minimum est, id minimum est malum.
> PLAUT. *Stich.* i. 2.

I thought, perhaps, that by asking my Talking Friend if Elizabeth ever came to Shrewsbury I might pick up some scattered information. He replied at once, with a pleasant shake of his time-worn boughs: 'There was a great talk about it, and great preparations, and the whole valley of the Rea, from Caux Castle to Coleham, was in a great state of excitement, but after all she did not come. It was said that it was because of the plague in the Old Town, and I believe it to have been true, for many passed and repassed this way and throughout the valley, having (they are the very same words used in Mr. Prynce's letter) the plague running on them'; which naturally led me to suppose that *this* plague might have been a form of small-pox or some painful scrofulous eruption, which took that shape. It seems to have lingered hereabouts for a long while. Indeed, it had not died out in 1576, for in that year the fair of St. Matthew (September 22), in consequence of its continuance, was kept 'in a place sometime a common, called Kyngsland, and the County Court at Meole Braces.' I should add here that Christopher Hawkshart, vicar of St. Chad's, died of the plague in this same year—a man very well known in the valley of the Rea, for he was a lover of the angle, and much respected. He had been a friend of the good rector of Hanwood, now with God, and often visited him. The churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary's give an entry of the large quantity of wine used at the Communion 'aboute the feaste of St. Michaell, at whiche tyme a great nombre of every parishe in the towne did receve in the tyme of the plage,' A.D. 1576.

What my Talking Friend said of the queen's not coming to Shrewsbury, but of her intent to come, is quite correct, as is picked out from the following item in the roll of accounts. 'Geven Mr. Churchyard in rewarde, being sent unto us by my

lord p'sident with letters conc'ninge the cominge of the Quene's Ma^tie^ to this towne, by the assent of the aldermen and counsellors, *3l. 6s. 8d.*' To which the historians append the following extract from their MS. Chronicle: 'This year, 1575, the Queen's Majestie went a progresse towards Shrewsbury; but because of death' (i.e. some pestilential disease) 'within four myles of the same, she came no farther than Lychefilld; and from thence went to Worcester; the which cyty she lyckyd well.' This was her only progress this way.

Of old Thomas Churchyard and of Sir Philip Sidney some few mixed notes will be thrown together in another chapter—as early Shrewsbury Worthies. Meanwhile, it is enough to say that the old rhymer-poet who tracked the pike till advanced years, and died very poor, had followed the queen in her progress to Bristol in August 1574, and was thought sufficiently of by Sir Henry Sidney, with whom he had been in Ireland, to honour the queen on the present occasion. 'A writer,' said Baldwyn in his introduction to 'Shore's Wife,' 'of good continuance, and one that dayly is exercised to set out both matter tragical and other popular histories and verses.'

It was in this year that a great earthquake was felt throughout the midland counties, and my Talking Friend seemed to have felt it. Stow mentions it, but I do not find any account of it in our local histories. 'The 26 February,' the old chronicler says, 'between 4 and 6 of the clocke in the afternoone, great earthquakes happened in the cities of Yorke, Worcester, Gloucester, Bristowe, Hereford, and in countries aboute, which caused the people to run out of their houses, for fear they should have fallen on their heads'; and he adds: 'The bell in the Shirehall of Denbigh was caused to toll twice by the shaking of the hall, &c.' He makes a like remark on another earthquake in 1580, which happened in London, and almost generally throughout all England, causing 'such amazedness of the people as was wonderful for that time, and caused them to make their prayers unto Almighty God. The great clocke bell in the palace of Westminster stroke of itself against the hammer with shaking, as divers

clockes and bells in the citie and elsewhere.' Such passages as these gave origin to the Laureate's lines—

> But Ida, with a voice that like a bell,
> Tolled by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
> Rang ruin, answered full of grief and scorn.

About this time there was a great talk of Papists in disguise up and down the country, and the rector of Pontesbury, still living, was much alarmed lest they should gain ground again. The name given to these supposed interlopers was ''Nointed Shavers'—not complimentary, and evidently borrowed from the tonsure—and these the Pope was said to have sent out through the length and breadth of the land:

> Many *bald* priests t' enact pernicious things—
> Those close confessors, that moste use their skill
> To work the weaker sex unto their will.

The name, as it is well known, remains amongst us till this day, and is used by all the common people in Shropshire. But, as far as I can make out, there was no real cause for alarm in these parts; indeed, there was far greater alarm, if they would but have realised the fact, for the general negligences and ignorance of the clergy and laity calling themselves Protestant.

I do not make out from anything that transpired in our many conversations that the valley of the Rea, as a people, knew anything of Alva's Bloody Tribunal, sent by Philip II. into the Low Countries in 1567; nor of the Pope's Bull hung on the Bishop of London's gate in Paul's Churchyard May 25, 1570; nor, which is stranger still, of St. Bartholomew's Massacre at Paris, August 24, 1572, when so many thousand Huguenots were slain throughout that kingdom by secret orders of Charles IX., egged on by Catherine de' Medici his mother. It was at the time of the Massacre of Vassy (1562) that the Duke of Guise first meditated the Roman Catholic Crusade, which culminated in this black day's work.

It was only the old rector of Pontesbury and the lords of the soil round about and of the old homestead at Meole who

knew anything about such matters ; and as regards the bloody work above alluded to the people's ignorance was bliss, for they might easily have been roused to some sudden fit of mutiny. And I call to mind what old Fuller said of Bonner, how he was 'imprisoned in the Marshalsea, a gaol being conceived the safest place to secure him from the people's fury, every hand itching to give a good squeeze to that sponge of blood' — one of Fuller's pithy remarks, though painful.

Local matters much more concerned my Talking Friend, and as he spoke of a fearful storm which occurred about this time all his leaves shook afresh, and his boughs were agitated as though their sap were human marrow and feeling. The storm here alluded to was that of 1579, which did great damage in Shrewsbury and was felt throughout the whole valley of the Rea. Marton Pool was lashed to fury, as though there had been an earthquake, like as some of the Irish Lakes felt the earthquake of Lisbon in 1755. Our historians give the extract following from the MS. Chronicle of Shrewsbury : 'This yeare, 1579, the 28th of October, at night, dyd aryse sutche an extreme tempest that did mutch harme abroad in England, bothe on laund and water ther, by the force of which extreme wynde the highe aulter wyndowe and Trynytie wyndowe of St. Marye's Church was borne downe, both stone, iron, glasse, and all ; and also the leads which couvryd the said churche was, with the vehemencye thereof, rollyd upp with the force of the same wynde untill it cam to the stone woorcke, in marvellous strange manner to beholld.' It was upon this occasion that, in aid of contributions towards the repairs of this venerable fabric, a 'plaket,' or what was in my early days called a 'brief,' was obtained, but which appears to have been confined to the county of Salop. We do these things differently now by our large societies, but it must always have been a pleasure to thoughtful people to drop their mite into the brief-box when carried round.

Somewhere about this time the Feast of St. George (it was April 23, 1581) was kept with great splendour in Shrewsbury by Sir Henry Sidney, the President of the Marches, and

the whole valley of the Rea poured forth to see the gala-sight. It would have been a great delight to old Edward Warter to have seen the Free School boys, to the number of three hundred and sixty, mustered in the Gay, and to have heard their war-like speeches, in which they declared their readiness to defend their queen and country. The verses given by our historians on the departure of the Lord President, repeated by the scholars at a sort of maske, are thought to be T. Churchyard's.

It was about Easter in 1584 that Philip Hewson made an earlier visit than usual to Shrewsbury, and, as was his wont, came on to Meole to fish the Rea brook and to see his friends. On his way here he found numbers of people returning to Shrewsbury, with great bundles of holly, yew, and box. 'He clearly did not know,' said my Talking Friend, 'that almost anything "green" was at that season called "palm"'; and he added that 'all box and yew-tree hedges were sure to be clipped at this season, and sometimes the ivy and the holly, though really adjuncts of Christmas. The mistletoe sprig' (and he shook his leaves pleasantly) 'was acceptable at all times!'

It was on this visit that Philip Hewson brought down with him a new root which had never been seen in Shropshire before, called *Batata*, no doubt the original sweet potato, which soon disappeared, having preceded by twenty or thirty years the root we now so much prize. This could hardly have been procured by the good merchant so early, I think. It appears to have been grown first on Sir Walter Raleigh's estate in Ireland, brought over there by the colonists from Virginia. The progress of the potato was, I imagine, from Peru to old Spain, and thence westwards. But the reader must look to some 'Book of the Garden' (e.g. Mr. McIntosh's, vol. i. p. 199, &c.) on this matter. Perhaps we have relied too much upon it as a root—certainly so in Ireland—but when all is said that can be said no more valuable root was ever introduced into this country. Philip Hewson knew the great love the Master of Meole had for horticulture, and hence it was that he constantly brought down with him some new seed or root. The potato he connected always

with Sir Walter Raleigh, and said it ought to have been called after him. But, in the hidden valley of the Rea, they were few and far between who knew anything of this great man. How my Talking Friend would have been delighted with the incident which follows!

In August, 1583, Sir Walter Raleigh's kinsman took possession of Newfoundland in the queen's name, but all the rest of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's voyage was one of misfortune, and in the tempestuous seas he had to encounter, his little vessel—the 'Squirrel,' of only ten tons—could not live. It is related that the 'Golden Hind' had kept as near to her as she could during the raging tempest, until the sad catastrophe, and it was with feelings of awe that the crew caught sight of Sir Humphrey, calmly sitting on the ruling deck with a book before him, and heard him cry to his companions in distress, 'Cheer up, boys; we are as near to heaven by sea as by land!' 'A speech,' says an eyewitness, 'well-becoming a soldier of Jesus Christ, as I can testify he was.'

For several years my Talking Friend had very little to report. There was much talk, he said, amongst those who passed and repassed relative to the queen's new charter for the old town, which seems to have passed the seals early in 1586. In this same year Camden's great work—his 'Britannia'—first appeared, but my Talking Friend knew nothing of his visit. Had the old rector been living, we should have known as much about him as we did of Leland the Antiquary's visit, but there was no such observant chronicler in the valley of the Rea now, and we know nothing but what he himself tells, and what has been alluded to in these pages more than once. Much as it concerns the nation at large, too little was known of the execution of the unhappy Mary Queen of Scots, in 1587. The wail of sorrow hardly reached the shallows of the Rea, nor was the great conspirator's name, perhaps, ever heard of here—

> Hight Babington, attired in rusticke shape,
> With walnut leaves discolouring his face;

though the walnut leaf was a dye well-known in the valley, and not unfrequently used in the neighbourhood, as it was

afterwards by the gipsies. Indeed, two or three of these trees had been lately planted at Meole, of which the Old Oak said he knew nothing, save and except that if the boys threw stones and crushed the leaves, they emitted a strong and heavy smell. 'For my part,' said my Talking Friend, 'the foreign trees seemed half afraid of all passers-by!' He, however, was not one to have said of himself,

> Sæpe meas vento frondes tremuisse putâstis;
> Sed metus in nobis causa tremoris erat.

'Somewhere about this time,' said my Talking Friend, 'I missed a worthy man, a barrister—Edward Davies by name—who used to come and go this way for years, always making a stay at the Old Homestead, and chatting pleasantly beneath my shade. It was his nearest way from the Marsh to Shrewsbury. He was a personal friend of the merchants, and they often travelled together when Philip was on his return from Welshpool to Newtown. Few men,' my Talking Friend said, 'had more to say, and all that he said was pleasantly said.' To which he added, 'He spoke Welsh like a native Cymro.'

The memory of the Old Oak was quite faithful and trustworthy. The person alluded to was the son of David ap Ievan of the Marsh, who left a son who settled at Trewerne in Montgomeryshire. The good barrister himself who wished to protect the 'concealed heads' of St. Mary's was buried there March 9, 1589. The parish books mention him with honour; and, as he would receive no fees, they made a present to him of wine. I may add, by the way, that it was this genial barrister who made mention beneath the Old Oak of the celebrated giant from Antwerp, Antony Frynpan by name, who lodged 'under the Wyle, and was two yards and a half of height.' The poor fellow appeared to have been barbarously murdered for his money as he was on his way back to London shortly after.

It has been said that, comparatively speaking, little news reached the valley of the Rea at this time—not so much, by any means, as when Caux Castle was in its glory, and the Normans journeyed this way towards Shrewsbury. The

year, however, of 1588, said my Talking Friend, was altogether an exception—that *Octogesimus octavus mirabilis annus*—when 'Spain's Armada, that world-wondred fleet' was arrayed against us. At that time people seemed to speak of nothing else, and were in a wild state of excitement. The most recent news about the Invasion was brought by Philip Hewson in the spring, but the danger had been apprehended two years at least before by Walsingham and others. Now, however, the Armada was on the move from Lisbon towards the Groyne, or the modern Corunna, about May 25.

But England, true to herself, was not behindhand. 'One spirit,' says Turner, 'of loyal patriotism and active magnanimity pervaded the kingdom. The City of London set a generous example. When the State council inquired what it would do for its country and its queen, the chief magistrate desired the Cabinet to mention what they thought requisite. The ministers desired from it 5,000 men, and 15 ships. The Lord Mayor craved two days for deliberation, and then, in the name of the metropolis, desired their sovereign to accept of 10,000 soldiers and of 30 able vessels. The whole kingdom emulated this wise exertion to noble liberality. Every city, county, town, and village displayed a consenting ardor, and an enthusiastic loyalty.'

Nor was the old town of Shrewsbury behindhand, or the county either. Well-known names are written down on the honourable list of contributors, and not one of them but would have fought for her to the death when she said at Tilbury: 'I am come among you, not as for my recreation and sport, but as being resolved, in the middle and heat of the battle, to lie or die among you all; to lay down, for my God and my people, my honour and my blood even in the dust. I know that I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a king, and a king of England too!' Well done, brave old Bess! It was quite in character with the words which she spoke before the offending council, rapping out at the same time a dreadful oath—'I'll teach the scurvy pedant that I am of the masculine, feminine, and neuter gender too!'

'It was a pleasant sight,' says old Stow, 'to behold the soldiers, as they marched towards Tilbury—their cheerful countenances, courageous words and gestures,' &c., adding presently, 'that her presence and princely encouragement there, Bellona-like, inspired a second spirit of love, loyalty, and resolution unto every soldier in her army, who, being as it were ravished with their sovereign's sight, as well commanders as common soldiers, both forgate the fickleness of Fortune, and the chance of Warre, and prayed heartily the Spaniards might land quickly, and when they knew they were fled they began to lament.'

Latterly, the queen's reviewing the troops at the Fort has been disputed. At all events she landed there, and if the army was posted in the camp by West Tilbury Church, as is most probable, and she was escorted there with Leicester and a thousand horse, it is a matter of little consequence, and Tilbury will yet retain its pristine name and glory. Once more I must put before the reader the very curious words of 'England's Eliza'—

> The appointed place of general meeting was
> In Essex, on the coast of Tilburie,
> To which the people in such troops did passe,
> That with their traine the shores they multiplie,
> Like Palamedes birds that form the Y,
> When cloude-like the thicke flockes their flight they take
> O'er Thracian Woodes to Strymon's seven-fold lake.
> Then pycht they down their tents t' oppose all harmes,
> Set up the royal standards all about,
> The fair supporters of Eliza's armes,
> The rampant lion and the dragon stout,
> And th' ensigne of St. George, which many a rout
> On Marches noble race with conquering hand
> Hath famous made in many a forren land.

Our old divines used to speak of the winds and the waves, on this occasion, as fighting under English colours. They meant no harm, and the destruction of the 'Invincible Armada,' as it was called, was a great deliverance to the nation. No mean names were those connected with this victory on the waters from the high admiral—

> Renowned Howard, Time's swan-white haired Sonne;

from Drake, and Hawkins, and Frobisher to the man before the mast. As at the Battle of the Nile, in modern times, every sailor was then a great man in his place.

The Thanksgiving Day in London was November 24, when the queen attended at St. Paul's in state. 'In the old town, close by, it was held on the 19th of the same month, and many went there,' said my Talking Friend, 'from the valley of the Rea.' It 'was a solemn day in Shrewsberie,' say our Historians, quoting some old documents, 'and all people that day keapt it holy unto the Lord, that had given her Majesty sutche victorie and blessed overthrowe of the Spanish power and huge navy, to the great rejoysinge of all England. God be praysid. Amen.'

The queen's presence at St. Paul's is thus alluded to in the old poem so often quoted in these pages, and so well worth referring to :—

> Under a canopie of gold wide spreade,
> In chariot throne, like warres triumphant dame,
> With crowne imperiall on her princely head,
> Borne by two milk-white steeds in state she came
> To Paul's high temple, while with loud exclaime,
> The people in her passage all about
> From loyal hearts their Aves loud did shout.

'We will not mention,' says old Fuller '(save in due distance of help) the industry and loyalty of the Lord Howard (admiral) the valour of our captains, the skill of our pilots, the activity of our ships ; but assign all to the goodness of God, as Queen Elizabeth did. Leave we her in the quire of St. Paul's Church, devoutly on her knees, with the rest of her nobles in the same humble posture, returning their unfeigned thanks to the God and Giver of all victory, whilst going abroad we shall find some of her subjects were employed in implacable enmity about ecclesiastical discipline one against another. But let not the mentioning of this deliverance be censured as a deviation from the Church History of Britain, silence thereof being a sin ; for had the design took effect, neither protestant church in Britain had remained, nor history thereof been made at this present.'

About this time my Talking Friend told me that many of

the people who used to work their way to Shrewsbury from Ludlow, by way of Pitchford, were to be seen in those parts no more. By referring to historical details, there is no doubt about his being correct in his statement, for the visits of the Council of the Marches to the old town now became intermittent, and the loss was one which was evidently felt. Later than this, in 1599, the old MS. Chronicle mentions, as a matter worthy of note, that the Council came to Shrewsbury to keep term, 'but they contynewid here but one tearme, and departed hence, seal and all, the 6th of July ; the towne being worse rather than better for them, because they had made provision for them for two tearmes.' Those who, forty years ago, were in the habit of visiting the old Hanse towns of Kiel and Lubeck, will readily understand what is here said of Shrewsbury.

One summer's morning my Talking Friend told me he thought the new townhall in Shrewsbury must be a very fine building ; but he expected that nowadays they ran short of oak. And then he added, with a melancholy and mournful shake of his aged head : 'One of the last visits the good old rector of Hanwood paid to Shrewsbury was at an assize when he saw the covered seats in the market-place, and heard the complaint of one Harry Pullen, who had been obliged to shut up his shop to make free room for the seats of justice, which the good man thought hard.

The extracts following refer to a later date, to the year 1591, but they show how true was the memory of the Old Oak. Sergeant, or Judge, Owen lived in those days, who had purchased the estate of Condover from the Vyner family. The name has only just died out, and the representative is now a Cholmondeley.

'To Edward Baker, for the furnishinge of the *seate in the streate*, where my l'd chiffe baron sate, with coveringes and other necessaries. 10*s*.'

'Paid to two poore men for the hindrance of their trade, in shuttinge up their shops, where the judge did sit. 3*s*.'

Originally, as has been observed before in these pages, the assizes seem to have been held in the open air, like the 'Thing'—or Ting, as it is pronounced – of our Scandinavian

ancestors. The booth-hall, indeed, in part an open roof, dates back here as far as the time of Edward II., and shows what sort of accommodation the town afforded—no worse, probably, than others afforded in general, for in such matters as these our forefathers were easily satisfied. Bothie and the lucken-booths (wooden shops to be locked up and not moved) amongst the Scotch, all show the same source, the same hardihood as regarded weather, and the full meaning of the Jacobite relic—

> Fare thee well, my native cot,
> *Bothie* of the birken tree!
> Sair the heart, and hard the lot,
> O' the lad that parts wi' thee.

The mention of the word 'Thing' calls to mind at once the Icelandic Thingvalla, and the power of the North-men in England, with their open courts, and free course of—sometimes, it must be allowed, rough—justice. 'The word Thing,' says Mr. Worsaae in his 'Danes and Norwegians,' &c., 'whereby, as is well known, both deliberative and judicial assemblies were designated in the north from the earliest times, does not seem to have been employed by the Anglo-Saxons in that signification, or, at all events, not before the Danish immigrations into England. The Anglo-Saxons used in that sense the term *gemôt*, as in 'Wittena-gemôt' (so in Mot Hall) 'which was the name of their parliament. Husthings are also especially mentioned in the "Sagar" as having been held in the north, particularly by kings, jarls, and other powerful individuals. The Husthing in London was originally established in order to protect and guard the laws and liberties of the city, and the customs of the courts of judicature, and the principal magistrates were judges.' In the Latin of the middle ages it is said of a person who attended there, *Comparavit in Hustings.* A similar Husting was formerly found in the Isle of Sheppey, at the mouth of the Thames.

I happened one day to mention a favourite horse of the last of the old squires at Meole, which quietly followed the groom into Bishop Butler's kitchen, to the great alarm and astonishment of the old cook and housekeeper who lived there in those days, when my Talking Friend replied with a

pleasant shake of his leaves: 'There was a horse in Queen Elizabeth's days, who did more than that, and surpassed all horses that had ever been seen in these parts, or, perhaps, in the world—Mr. Bancks's white horse from Staffordshire, which all the whole valley of the Rea turned out to see.'

From the historians of Shrewsbury we pick out that this was in 1591, and the Old Oak is quite correct in stating that the horse at Shrewsbury was a white one. Evidently Mr. Bancks had trained and educated more than one horse, as the old *brochure* speaks of 'Marocus Ecstaticus, or Bank's *Bay* Horse,' which was shown off in the yard of the Belle-Savage in 1595. No doubt it is with reference to one of these horses that Moth says in 'Love's Labour's Lost': 'How easy it is to put years to the word "three," and study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you,' to which passage and the commentators the reader is referred. It would appear that on one occasion (said to have been in 1601) this wonderful horse was made to override the vane of St. Paul's Cathedral, which gave origin to the story in the Jest-books, how a serving man came to his master and bid him hasten out to see the sight, to whom he replied, 'Away, you fool; what avails it to see one horse dancing and neighing on the top, when I can see so many braying asses below?' It may be added that when in France Bancks was accused of dealing in magic and imprisoned, but like our modern D'Arcy, he told them he could teach any other horse the same tricks in a year. Having quoted Sir Walter Raleigh's saying: 'If Bancks had lived in older times, he would have shamed all the enchanters in the world, for whoever was most famous among them could never master or instruct any beast as he did his horse.' And I bethought me of that sentence in Cicero: 'Sus rostro si humi A litteram impresserit, num propterea suspicari poteris Andromacham Ennii ab ea posse describi?'

Such was the horse the whole valley of the Rea turned out to see, and for a long time to come nothing but horsemanship was talked of, and Bancks's clever horse.

'It was close upon this time,' said my Talking Friend, 'that I suffered more injury than I had ever, to my recollection, done before, from one of those fearful storms which frequently

swept across the country. For a day or two there had been a sobbing and a low wailing in the direction of Habberley Hole, and I knew well enough, from long experience, that something was in the wind. I had little idea, however, of what was to follow, for the roar, when the storm burst, was as if all the artillery in the world was doing execution on some doomed city. A waggon-load, at least, of my choicest and finest boughs, littered the ground, and it was several years before I recovered the effects of it: indeed I do not know that I ever did, for, previous to that time, though I say it that should not, I was one of the handsomest trees in the country. Grand in appearance as was my friend at Shelton, he had long passed his prime. It was said at the time that a third of the great oaks between Meole and Minsterley were blown down.'

On comparing old Stow's Chronicle with the historians of Shrewsbury, this fearful storm must have occurred in the year 1593-4, and in this neighbourhood on Thursday, March 21, when the steeple of St. Mary's in Shrewsbury, the upper part of it, was removed out of its place towards the south about five inches, so that they could not ring the bells, 'which were the pleasantest and comfortablest ring of bells in all the town.' The weather continued tempestuous for a long time, and it was not till April 5 that the repairing was commenced. The work was completed on June 22, and the next day, being Sunday, 'the grette bell was wronge next to the sermond,' and on the following Saturday 'all the belles were roonge verey solemnly to the comfort of all the hearers.' There can be no loneliness, even in imagination equal to that the poet pictures in 'Juan Fernandez'—

> But the sound of the church-going bell
> Those valleys and rocks never heard;
> Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
> Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

The following is the account in Stow's Chronicle, and it is repeated in the 'Summarie' of the Chronicles, in almost the same words, as indeed are the more general stormy incidents, whether of wind or flood, during this wild tempestuous year,

to which one might apply the words of old Thomas Churchyard, the native poet—

A feast full of sad cheare,
Where griefs are all on heape,
Whose solace is full dear,
And sorrowes are good cheape.

'In this moneth of March,' says the Chronicler, 'great storms of wind overturned trees, steeples, banks, houses, &c. Namely, in Worcestershire, in Beaudley Forest, many oaks were overturned. In Horton Wood more than 1,500 oakes were overthrowne in one day, namely, on the Thursday next before Palme Sunday. In Staffordshire, the steeple in Stafford towne was rent in pieces along through the midst and thrown upon the church, wherewith the said roof was broken. Houses and barns were overthrowne in most places of these shires. In Canti Wood'—I have before said that I suspect the Cymry left their names behind them there—'more than 3,000 trees were overthrowne. Many steeples, above 50 in Staffordshire, were perished [*sic*] or blowne downe. The eleventh of April a rain continued very sore, more than 24 houres long, and withal, such a wind from the North, as pearced the walls of houses, were they ever so strong.'

No wonder that 'the Clergy of the town, with the consent of the bailiffs, appointed a general fast, to be held in St. Mary's Church on Sunday, August 11th, for seasonable weather to bring in the corn; at which day,' says our Chronicler, 'most of the inhabitants of Shrewsbury repaired thither, when were such goodly sermons made of the preacher, to the comford of all the hearers, that they contynewyd from 8 of the clocke of the morning until 4 of the clocke at nyght, and never came owte of churche.'

The plague which showed itself in different parts of England in these days was thought to have been connected with the inclemency of the seasons. It was much dreaded, from fatal experience, in the old town of Shrewsbury, but I do not find that it reached it. My Talking Friend said that such great floods as overflowed the valley of the Rea during the present and the two preceding years had hardly ever been known. Shakespeare, in his 'Midsummer Night's Dream,'

written in 1594, is supposed to allude to this inclement time, when he says, in his own unmatchable descriptive language—

> Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
> As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
> Contagious fogs; which, falling on the land,
> Have every pelting river made so proud,
> That they have overborne their continents.

'All which,' say our historians, 'the poet attributes to the estrangement of Titania from Oberon. Our Churchyard, with less taste but greater piety, resorts to a superior origin.' The words are from his 'Charitie,' printed in 1595—

> Nature, thinks scorne to do her dutie right,
> Because we have displeasde the Lord of Light.

On which they very aptly quote the comment of Steevens: 'Shakespeare, in prime of life and success, fancifully ascribes this distemperature of seasons to a quarrel between the playful rulers of the fairy world: while Churchyard, broken down by age and misfortune, is seriously disposed to represent the same inclemency of weather as a judgment from the Almighty on the offences of mankind.' Later than this, in the year 1596, England suffered generally from dearth; and it was felt much in Shrewsbury and throughout the whole valley of the Rea.

Something later than this our old friend Philip Hewson made a visit to the old homestead at Meole. It was after the Edict of Nantes, in which Henry IV. granted toleration to the Protestants, declaring it to be 'perpetual and irrevocable,' though revoked by Louis XIV. October 24, 1685. That it was after 1598 I picked up from my Talking Friend, who was much interested in the concessions which were made at that time; and that it was not later than 1600 I ascertained from the fact that the good merchant took a great deal of interest in what was going on at the old homestead. The fact was that Meole was at this time rebuilt, and though never much of a house at any time it was very greatly improved. Some of the wall-eyed and rough-hewn timber which was inserted at this time remained till the beginning of the present century, as did the old well, or secret hiding-place, so common to

many of the houses in the midland counties, and which were much used in the time of the great Rebellion, for in my childhood it impressed me with no little awe. Another fact struck me when some considerable improvements were made about the year 1820, which was this: two of the inner passages were battered walls, filled in with chopped reeds and clay, like to what we see on the Babylonian bricks. But what attracted my attention particularly was this: the clay was not the common red clay of the country, but of a yellowish cast, and, as I thought, worked up with mortar of some sort, for it was hard. The reeds used came probably from Pomer Pond or Marton Pool; certainly not from the Rea. For many years now Philip Hewson had participated in the hospitalities of the old house, and upon this occasion he brought some pieces of furniture from London to decorate it, though, he said at the same time (at which my Talking Friend was greatly delighted) 'that all the shops in London could not furnish a home as the Oak of the Country could.'

From this time till the end of the reign of Elizabeth my faithful Chronicler had little to report—little, at least, that concerned these parts. The last thing he seemed to recollect was another visit of the venerable merchant, which must have been in the autumn of 1602. My Talking Friend called it to mind, owing to an extraordinary dream of the worthy man, which shall be recorded by and by. It was on this occasion that, as a merchant of the City, and a thorough man of business, he mentioned a Charter recently granted—December 31, 1600—for the exclusive trade to the East Indies and China to certain merchants in London. I mention it here as the origin of the East India Company.

But what seemed at this time to occupy the attention of this benevolent man most was the state of the poor, overseers for whom were first appointed by Statute 43 Elizabeth c. 1., and in the year 1601. The whole matter was deeply impressed on his mind, and he collected information on the subject from all parts where he went. Even to this day it is a problem we have not well solved. 'The law,' says Bishop Warburton, in a sermon preached in 1767, 'which quarters the poor in their several parishes grew in time so

intolerable a burthen, both on the landed and commercial interests, and so difficult to be shaken off, that the Legislature hath now employed more than one age in seeking for the proper remedy and hath not yet found it.' From time immemorial the poor had been supported– to say nothing of the monasteries—by voluntary contributions. Henceforward it was to be a statute matter, and whatever objections we may raise to this or that form of administering poor relief—we must admit that their relief is due to the spirit of Christianity – which is not, to apply the words of old Richard Whitlock in his 'Zootomia,' 'Like the pulpit clothes, locked up all the week, or only used when the church doors are open.'

And so I pass on to the remarkable dream above alluded to:—

Philip Hewson's Dream.

It was on the present visit, after Hewson had recovered from a very heavy fit of sickness—apparently a fever, whether typhus or typhoid—that my Talking Friend, on a bright summer's day when all his leaves were alive with the busy hum of happy insects, heard the good merchant record an extraordinary DREAM which he had recently had, and could not forget, though the heads of it in themselves were so plain and simple that even a child might understand them without burdening his small memory.

It appears that he came to Shrewsbury on business in the year 1602, and being suddenly taken ill, was brought, *with* his will or *by* his will, to the well-known house in the Abbey Forgate, called Master Prynce's Place—Philip Hewson being not only Richard or Lawyer Prynce's personal friend, but the friend likewise of his brother's wife's father, William Young, Esq., of Caynton. The place is better known now by the name of the Whitehall—a very pleasant place still to those on whose memory dear old Bishop Butler's name hangs like jewellery!

But, as I said, nothing could be so simple as the account of good old Philip Hewson to his friends at the old homestead of Meole, where he came to recruit his shattered strength and eat a fresh trout and an eel out of the Rea, for he always

maintained that the trouts were capital, and that no stream in England ever produced such silvery eels, about which he had imbibed a curious notion, for he said 'they were in the habit of washing themselves clean on the shallows by moonlight.' I never heard the notion before, but probably he picked it up in his flannel dealings with the Welsh, who, in some places, like the Scotch, have peculiar notions as to the eel tribe. Many of them would have agreed with the distinction made by Homer between eels *and* fish, in that highly poetic account of the Scamander's and Simois's attack upon Achilles.

In these days the heads of the Medical Faculty were, either by breeding or education, essentially gentlemen, and much accounted of in the family ; and it was the worthy and much-attached friend of Richard Prynce, Hugh Wynne, who first told him that the merchant was so ill, and that he was scarcely well enough lodged for a man of his years and standing. The truth is, he had taken up his abode in one of the old Hostelries *below the Wyle*—as his custom was—for Philip (though the Reformation had no stauncher friend, nor religion a humbler servant) was a man of wit and humour, and liked, as no unintelligent Londoner, to pick out for himself what was going on in the Old Town. It was, in fact, his humour, and he knew from experience where pleasantry flowed the fastest. Men wearied with business must, he said, have relaxation, and so, when he paid his periodical visits, loving and beloved, he showed himself impressed

With all the tender charities of life.

And so it came about that he was lodged at Mr. Prynce's new house, and, on his arrival there, being put entirely at his ease, he was told by his kind friend and host that he must be obedient in everything, for that 'Hugh Wynne, who, at such times, had full command over the house, had told him that my life was pretty much in his charge and keeping, and he would not have said so without cause. And so, being a man of few words, I said little, thanked my kindly host, and was at once installed by old John Altree, the butler—as we would call him now—in the wainscoted room, the largest and the most airy one in the house.

'Soon after Dr. Hugh Wynne (that was his real title) came in person. Poorly as I was I can quite recollect his gold-headed cane, which every now and then, or I dreamed it, he put close to his nose or leant upon it. A very pleasant man was Dr. Hugh Wynne, and he administered to me with his own hands some excellent broths or a callis, which I relished much, though it seemed strange that I should do so, as I had little taste enough. All this was the good man's tact and cleverness, for I should probably have taken it from no one else. The difference was, no doubt, between grease and no grease. Clearly, all was made at the hostelry "in media Græcia," he said, with an encouraging smile, "and was hardly suitable to a sick man's palate, though he had a great respect of the old hostelry and its host. A better man in his position than Edward Bernard was not to be found, and when that at the Abbey failed, few Almonry baskets were better filled than his. He was not the sick traveller's host only, but provided always for the sick and needy." It seemed to refresh me,' said the kindly merchant beneath these boughs, 'to hear him talk.' (To which my Talking Friend added, 'I knew Edward Bernard well, and there were many that liked to see him pass this way, as he often did, with his saddle-bags and great boots and cannions.') 'After the butler had time to settle, I suppose within half an hour, he came into the room again and gave me a cup of something very like Xeres sack, but he said it was hydromel and hypocras, which was quite as palatable as the callis. Finding that I was no more sick and squeamish, and that all remained in position (though my head all the while seemed much oppressed), he said that he should see me an hour later, and in the meanwhile take his evening meal with our mutual friend Mr. Prynce. Whilst he was away I dozed off and slept comfortably, only disturbed a little about some pills, which, as far as I recollect, were left at Montgomery and Pool.

'About six of the clock, the Doctor, true to his word, and kindly as ever, came again to my bedside. He felt my pulse, examined my tongue, and put a few questions to me, which, I suspect, I did not answer very rationally. At all events I know that he and my friendly host whispered to-

gether. I recollect it well, because the ears of the sick are alive to much more than the well suspect, and he repeated in my hearing what he had said to Mr. Prynce before: "The case requires care, but I am very hopeful about our friend Philip, whom we and the Drapers' Company could ill spare. His life, however, is pretty much in your hands. When all is quite quiet I wish this potion to be administered. It is a very powerful one. The room to be kept in darkness, but well aired. My impression is that the patient will sleep from twelve to eighteen hours, and when he awakes old Altree must see that there is no surprise, no haste or hurry, and we shall note the result." The result was, that although very weak for some time, I awoke refreshed, instead of stupefied, and I saw a smile light up the cheery Doctor's face as he said to Mr. Prynce, "It's now but a matter of time, and your good cook must work her will. I shall come in as I make my rounds and not lose her cates and cookery so well-ambered all."

'Within five weeks I was at Meole indebted for life, in every sense, to these kind men.'

But what was the DREAM?

'Strange enough,' said the good merchant, 'though drugged, for aught I know, with poppies, hemlock, aconites, hebenon, or mandragora, more potent than all the samples ever cut at Battersea—I have never forgotten that DREAM, and it is before me now as clearly as any matter of business I ever transacted in my life. Shortly after taking the potion I fell into a sleep—very restless at first, but afterwards the most profound—and it must have been in the earlier part of the night, no doubt, that the vision I now recount passed visibly before me.

'The Severn's banks were full, and on the bosom of the stream, where apparently the water was slightly higher than on the two sides, were two coracles, joined together, as it seemed to me, by a muscle or some sort of integument, like the old Maidens of Biddenden in Kent—a part of the south of England with which I am very well acquainted. Nothing could float so stilly or so evenly as they did. There was no rower with his paddle; and the upper, or usually open, portion

—its wicker-work interlining the raw cow's hide -- was covered with the softest otter-skin. And the one coracle said to the other, "His life depends upon our arriving at our journey's end. We are the Water-Coffers of Sleep, and the period of rest must not be broken."

'Behind the two coracles, in full career, was an ill-built and worse-bottomed noisy punt, and standing in it, at her full height, one of the fiercest, but at the same time one of the handsomest, women that eye ever rested on. She had on a coarse blue wadmal petticoat, and a tattered scarlet cloak, and her wild black elf-locks floated like meteors to the wind. In her bony hands she had a long boat hook, as great as old Joss the Cruckton weaver's beam, and with this she was constantly clutching at the two coracles. So determined, fierce, and fell was her impulse that you could see the muscles start on her cheeks and on her arms, and once she just missed the coracles, and they seemed to snap like whipcord. Meanwhile, stilly and quickly, those coracles of Charity plied their way, and the ripple of the water was not heard as they floated down the stream in advance of the weird and fierce old woman. And I heard a soft sound ascend from the otter-skin, saying, "He sleeps! He sleeps!" and the little British boats still made way—I know not how far or for how long— but it was a weary, weary way, and the sound of the water was in my ears like muffled bells. Nevertheless I was comforted, for the coracles were now far in advance of the eldritch woman ; and *not* to see her face and *not* to hear the noise of her creaking punt seemed in itself to be rest. Moreover, I was pleased to see many other single coracles one by one fall into the wake of the coracles of brotherhood. And they said : "Friend of the sleepless, let us abide in your company and enjoy the tabernacle of the Coffers of Sleep, for between the Ffynnon of the Severn in Plinlimmon's heights, and the Bore at its mouth, many of our fellow-folk want it themselves, and many of their wives and children are ill.' Such were the evident sounds my ears drew in, and the felt-clad coracles seemed to be Messengers of Mercy. Then, in a little time, a whole throng of coracles and other small craft seemed to join in the wake of the

Friends of Sleep, but no sound arose, neither was there the plash of water, nor the sound of oar or paddle; but the coracles which were the Habitation of Sleep seemed to have dominion over all, neither could I discern any more the haggard old red-cloaked woman and her creaking punt. The last time I saw her clearly—how long before I know not—she had flung away or lost her boat-hook, and was being carried sideways by the eddy into a willow-creek on the shore. Meanwhile, her arms were lifted up, not, as I thought, in *bene*diction, but with a *mali*son, for these wind-swept words fell on my still drugged ears—

> Wily Merchant! London's pride,
> Sent the Cymry to deride;
> Enemy to the Druid's loom,
> Mayest thou meet an early doom!

'All that I can recollect after this was that thousands upon thousands of cocks and shallops, single coracles, and floats, covered the whole stream of the Severn, and each, all, and every, as they passed by the felt-clad Coracles of Sleep, dropped their oars or paddles and did obeisance, and then arose a multitudinous voice—strange as such a paradox may appear—of the stillest silence, and the whisper of the voice was:—

> The Coracles Sabrina gave
> When first she plunged into the wave,
> The Fisher Brotherhood to save!
> Rest thee, Good Merchant, rest thee well;
> Her boat-hook gone, her punt athwart the shore,
> The fell, fierce woman cannot break the spell;
> She scathes the Coracles of Sleep no more.'

Such, said my Talking Friend, was Philip Hewson's dream, told with so much simplicity beneath my chequered shade. And the good man ate his trouts and the fish of the brook, and was strengthened; and, as was his wont, following in the footsteps of the venerable Hans Dhiel, left flannel behind him to warm the bodies of the poor, and, at no small cost, collected books wherewith to clothe the ignorance of their souls, amongst which were the Bibles and the Prayer Books up to this time published.

It was a lovely July morning and a very old friend had come over from Oswestry to spend a long day and to talk over old times—and a pleasant day it was. Amongst other things he said that a few days before there had been a great picnic at Nesscliff, at which he had been present, and some one had read out to them for their amusement Doraston's ballad of 'Wild Humphrey,' and I recollect the words—

> Oh, have ye not heard of the Wild Humphrey,
> Surnamed of Kynaston?' &c.

and how, in the days of our childhood, an old faithful servant of the household had taken us to see Kynaston's Cave, and how, as children we were wonderstruck.

On the departure of my friend I thought I must ask the Old Oak about the matter, and accordingly I put the question to him. His reply was 'that rough people, and in plenty, lived in those days, and that Humphrey Kynaston was one of them, the more shame for him, because he was well born and well educated.' To which he added, 'As far as I can call to mind he was no outlaw, but rather a thoughtless spendthrift, and the son of Sir Roger Kynaston,[1] an honoured name, with hitherto no blot on his escutcheon. 'Twas a pity that such heart of oak as he was should have had such an ill-timbered, ill-grained branch! And the worst of it was that, owing to his bold effrontery and hardiness, the whole country round about—from Oswestry to Montford's Bridge, thence to Shrewsbury, thence to Caux Castle, and from one end of the Valley of the Rea to the other—rung with his feats, and those of his horse, which some said was a spirit and came at his whistle. It was altogether a very sad and a very melancholy history, but characteristic of the times, which, though improving, were still full of wild outrage, and unsubdued barbarism!'

I had seldom heard my Talking Friend speak so sadly of times which certainly were improving; but his spirit was moved within him by the force of evil example, and true enough when the lords and high estates of a realm think it

[1] See *Additions to Camden*, vol. ii. 420.

no reproach to live dissolutely, the common people and the ignorant think they have some excuse for any wild aberrations they may rush into.

So thought the old woman who in my childhood's days kept the Cave, and such was evidently the view taken by my Talking Friend. The general reader may like to see the account given by Phillips under 'Middle Castle':

'After the death of Lord Strange, who resided part of the year at this Castle, it descended to the Derby family, when a Constable or Keeper was appointed. The first mentioned is William Dod, and after him Sir Roger Kynaston, of Hordley, was by commission appointed Keeper of Middle and Knockin Castles. Upon the decease of Sir Roger, his son Humphray (who, for his dessolute and riotous living, was called Wild Humphray) was tenant here. He had two wives, contracted many debts, and being for divers reasons outlawed, he left Middle Castle, which he had suffered to grow ruinous and out of repair, and went and sheltered himself in a Cave near the cliff, which is to this day called Kynaston's Cave. During Kynaston's residence here, several attempts were made to take him, without success. One time, when he was got over Montford's Bridge, on the side next Shrewsbury, and must return to his Cave over that Bridge, the Under Sheriff came with a considerable company of men, and the Bridge being then composed of stone pillars and planks laid from pillar to pillar they took up several planks, left such an open as they thought no horse could leap over, and laid themselves in ambush for his return. When Humphray came and was about to enter the Bridge, they rose up to apprehend him, which he perceiving, put spurs to his horse, and riding full speed, lypt over this space, and escaped. The measure of this leap was afterwards marked out upon a green plat on Knockin Heath, in the road between Knocker and Nesscliff, with an H and a K cut in the ground at the end of the leap. The letters were about an ell long, and were usually repaired yearly, by Mr. Kynaston of Ruyton, but are not now to be found. After this Humphray's time Middle Castle was never inhabited, but went to ruin.'

Having made mention of the so-called outlaw, 'Wild

Humphrey,' I cannot omit to add that 'Tam Marti quam Mercurio' is applicable to the family, though what follows is out of date and order, referring to the days of Charles the First.

Very different from the spendthrift scion of the old house was Francis Kynaston, the son of Sir Edward, who was born at Otley, and educated at Oriel College, Oxford. Afterwards—they are the words of Wood—'he went to Cambridge, studied there for some time, was made Master of Arts, and in 1611 returned to Oxon, where he was incorporated in that degree. Thence he went to the Court, where, being a man of parts, he had the honour of knighthood conferred upon him in 1618, and afterwards was made esquire of the body to King Charles I. This is the person who being every way accomplished, was made the first regent of the college or academy called the *Musæum Minervæ, anno* 1635, and therefore called a polite and quaint gentleman, "Palladii Patronæque virtutis Protomystes."' Wood then mentions his translation into Latin of Chaucer's 'Troylus and Cryseyde,' which appears to have been published in 1635, and then adds, 'Our author and translator, having performed other things which I have not yet seen, gave way to fate in 1642, or thereabouts, and was, as I suppose, buried at Oteley. This is the person also, who by experience falsified the Alchemyst's report, that a hen, being fed for certain days with gold, beginning when Sol was in Leo, should be converted into gold, and should lay golden eggs; but indeed became very fat.'

Peck, in his additions, states that Kynaston's other poem, 'Leoline and Sydanis,' containing much of the fabulous history of Mona, Wales, and Ireland, joined to which is his 'Cynthiades,' or 'Sonnets to his Mistresse,' was printed in 1646, 4to; but, not impossibly this is a mistake, and Wood may be right. 'In the preface,' says Peck, 'he boasts of having by him many pieces of real and solid learning ready written for the press, and apologising for exposing the trifle to the world in his old age, says that many older men than he wear love locks—"agnoscit veteris vestigia flammæ"—but those fires are now raked up in the embers, his *couvre-feu* bell being already rung.'

Thus much for the scholar and the poet, and those who can appreciate the fine scholarship of the Head Master of St. Paul's, Dr. Herbert Kynaston, will readily admit that the ancient vein still runs brightly. Having often had to mention the Druids in these pages, I may quote the lines following, which were given in the abstract of 'Leoline and Sydanis' in the 'Censura Literaria,' to which I will add that the only copy of these volumes I ever saw was in Southey's collection. He put it into my hands in 1829, but I was then so busily occupied that I had only time to read a few pages, which I now much regret:

> The Druid's words, like the death-boding notes
> Of the night raven or the ominous owl,
> Loud from their dismal hollow-sounding throats—
> Or like the noise of dogs, by night that howl,
> At the departing of a sick man's soul—
> Struck terror into Sydanis.

A few remarks must be made in ending the glorious reign of Elizabeth, for, unquestionably, she was one of those wise sovereigns who best showed her wisdom in choosing wise counsellors—something of which was known in the valley of the Rea, where the names of Burghley, and Bacon, and Christopher Hatton, were mentioned by Philip Hewson, together with that of Sir Walter Mildmay, the founder of Emmanuel College, Cambridge—a fact, he would add, better known than the settlement of Virginia, in the same year, so called from the Virgin Queen!

Yet, notwithstanding the galaxy of great names, happy they who live in these times and not in those. For they who study well the reign of the last of the Tudors will find that it was a fierce despotism, and that the liberty of the subject was but a fiction. Only let anyone examine the various Acts and Proclamations of the period and he will readily see this. Only to think that death was the punishment for casting nativities, or wishing the Queen's death! And that blood was even yet shed like water, and cried from the ground!

To those who look to statistics and to the increase in population, particularly that of London, it is curious to recollect that the erection of new buildings was forbidden there as

early as 1580, and that in the last year of her reign a proclamation was issued for pulling down newly built houses in and within three miles of London and Westminster; but, as old Stow remarks, 'Little was done, and small effect followed, more than of other the like Proclamations beforetime made, and also an Act of Parliament to that purpose. These cities are still increased in buildings and cottages, and pestered with inmates to the great infection and other annoyances of them both.' What would the good old man have said to a population of three millions?

One readily calls to mind the lines of Juvenal:

> Ego vel Prochytam præpono Suburræ.
> Nam quid tam miserum, tam solum vidimus, ut non
> Deterius credas horrere incendia, lapsus
> Tectorum assiduos, ac mille pericula sævæ
> Urbis, et Augusto recitantes mense poetas?

But, in passing over minor matters, the great point to be considered at the end of Elizabeth's reign is this: that the Reformation was complete. The Doctrines of our Faith were then fully and clearly enunciated, and our Formularies are pretty much now what they were then. In the words of a good and thoughtful man, 'We had learnt the fundamental truth on which the whole of Christianity rests, nay, which is itself Christianity; that we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not of our own works or deservings. That good works, however pleasing to God, are accepted only as proofs of the faith which we entertain of the mercies of Heaven, and as proceeding from love towards Him who hath redeemed us. That acts of penitence, however sincere, can in no sense be deemed a compensation for our sin, although they may prove useful to ourselves in preventing a repetition of omissions; and that there is no sacrifice for sin but the Atonement which was once offered on the Cross.' To which he presently adds, no less thoughtfully, the brief expression of a hope 'that Roman Catholics may draw nearer to Protestants in those points wherein we surpass them, and that we may draw nearer to them in those particulars wherein we have been losers in seceding from them. If any religious Roman

Catholic be unwilling to allow that in the advantages before enumerated we at all surpass him, if his whole hopes of salvation be built on that foundation on which we as Protestants trust, let us pray God that neither of us may as individuals be cast out through our own faults ; and while we acknowledge the advantages derived to us through the Church of Rome, let him thank God that he, as a member of that communion, has obtained in spiritual things many benefits which he owes to the existence of the Reformation ; and let us hope and pray, that the dissemination of religious knowledge may, by God's mercy, prove a blessing to all Christians.'

And the words of Michael, in 'Paradise Lost,' flashed across my mind :—

> when they see
> Law can discover sin, but not remove,
> Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
> The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
> Some blood more precious must be paid for man ;
> Just for unjust ; that in such righteousness,
> To them by faith imputed, they may find
> Justification towards God, and peace
> Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies
> Cannot appease, nor man the moral part
> Perform, and, not performing, cannot live.
> So law appears imperfect, and but given
> With purpose to resign them, in full time,
> Up to a better covenant, disciplined
> From shadowy types to truth ; from flesh to spirit ;
> From imposition of strict laws to free
> Acceptance of large grace ; from servile fear
> To filial ; works of law to works of faith.

And so I had closed the chapter on Elizabeth, when the following extract I had made from G. H. Lewes's 'Aristotle,' fell out of my note book—I insert it, as very applicable to many portions of this reign, and modern judgment upon divers features of it, and constantly to be modified as new documents come to light :

'One of the great difficulties in interpreting ancient opinions is to guard against the tendency of adding our fulness of knowledge in their vague expression. Ridolfi in his "Natural Magic," 1549, says that at Alexandria attempts were made to descry shape at a distance.' From these facts

Lewes remarks that it would naturally be concluded that the telescope was known to the ancients ; but he adds that Merville, Vegetio and Fabrizio correctly explain the mistake, viz. that these tubes were without glasses, and were used to assist vision by shutting out other objects. A modern, seeing the tubes, infers the existence of a telescope ; imagination supplies the lens.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LITERATURE UNDER ELIZABETH.

And well I wot, my rhyme, albe unsmoothe,
Ne says but what it means, ne means but sooth,
Ne harms the good, ne good to harmful person doth.
GILES FLETCHER, *Brit. Poets*, p. 825.

A man so every way
Deserving, no one action of his
In all his life time e'er degraded him
From the honour he was born to.
. . . . .
He bore his steerage true in every part,
Led by the compass of a noble heart.
WEBSTER, vol. iii. 340. Ed. Dyce.

Scena sonat, ludique vocant : spectate, Quirites,
Et fora Marte suo litigiosa vacent.
OVID, *Fast.* iv. 187.

Rusticus ad ludos populus veniebat in Urbem.
Ibid. iii. 783.

WHEN names, great in literature and of world-wide fame, are passed over, it is necessary to repeat again, for the information of the general reader, that this is a local history, pertaining specially to the valley of the Rea, where my Talking Friend and his time-honoured father have flourished for generations ; then, to the neighbourhood, and particularly to the old county town of Shrewsbury, whose bells, when the wind set right, could be heard at Hanwood and on the Hanwood Banks. Indeed, everything that happened at Shrewsbury was sure to be known in the open valley, for, as we have seen, it was the high road to Trê Valdwyn, or Montgomery, as well as into North Wales generally, the usual way to Caux Castle, and a very common cross way, through Pitchford to Ludlow. The result was that all the news of

the county was retailed beneath my old Friend's shade, and in time he became a chronicler better informed even than the Shelton Oak. It must be added, at the same time, that he laid open his branches for information, and, strong heart of oak as he was, he dearly loved a gossip. Still, it could not lightly have been said of him, in his pride of place,—

> Percontatorem fugito, nam garrulus idem est,
> Nec retinent patulæ commissa fideliter aures ;
> Et semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum.

Thomas Churchyard.

One of the names especially familiar in the old town about this time was that of old Thomas Churchyard, whom 'some,' says Winstanley, 'conceive to be as much beneath a poet as above a rhymer, yet who shall consider the time he wrote in, viz. the beginning the reign of Queen Elizabeth, shall find his verses to be about with the best of that age'—a very fair and just opinion.

There is no doubt but that Churchyard was born in Shrewsbury, and, as is supposed, somewhere about 1520. This is clear, for thus he writes in his 'Worthiness of Wales' (which was published in 1587):

> Shall Sallop say their counteyman doth dote
> To treate of things, and write what thinks him best?
> No sure,—such fault were double error plaine.
> If in thy pen be any poet's sayne,
> Or gifts of grace from skies did drop on thee,
> Then Shrewsberie towne thereof just cause must be.
>
> Both borne and bred in that same seate thou wast
> (Of race right good, or else records do lye),
> From whence to schoole wherever Churchyard past,
> To native soile he ought to have an eye ;
> Speake well of all, and write what world may prove,
> Let nothing go beyond thy countrie's love.

The researches of the historians of Shrewsbury are not able to throw much light upon his pedigree, neither is it clear whether he was a burgess or yeoman, though again he certainly claims to himself gentle birth :—

So born I was to home and land by right,
But in a bag to count I brought the same
From Shrewsburie towne, a seat of ancient fame.

Perhaps, what is above said will be best illustrated from Antony à Wood, who, as Dr. Bliss tells us, derived it from his own account of himself:

'Thomas Churchyard was born of genteel parents in the ancient borough of Shrewsbury, and being much addicted to letters when a child, his father, who had a fondness for him, caused him to be carefully educated in grammar learning, and to sweeten his studies, was taught to play on the lute. When he came to the age of about seventeen, he left his father and relations, and with a sum of money then given to him, he went to seek his fortune; and his heels being equally restless with his head, he went to the royal court, laid aside his books for a time, and, so long as his money lasted, became a royster. At length, being reduced low in his purse, he was taken into the service of the most noble, learned, and poetical Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, lived with him as his servant four years in the latter end of King Henry VIII. In which time applying himself to his books, and to the exercising his muse in poetry, he was much countenanced by that most noble count; but that earl being untimely cut off, to the great regret of learned men of that time, in January 1546, the hopes of Churchyard's rising higher were in a manner buried in his grave.'

Previous to this it would seem that he was at Oxford, where he went after his first foreign travel, in which he took great pains in learning the modern tongues. In Flanders, it would appear, he learnt German and Flemish, and afterwards French in Guines. Chalmers supposed it to have been after the peace at Crespy, 1544, that Churchyard wrote these lines:—

Aweary of those waiting woes,
Awhile he left the war;
And for dessire to learn the tongues,
He travelled very far;
And had of every language part,
When homeward he did drawe;
And could rehearsal make full well
Of that abrode he sawe.

He returned in time to see the sad end of his early patron Surrey—with whose poems some of his own were intermixed—and so previous to Henry's death. After this, on the accession of Edward VI., he was engaged in the Scottish wars, and was taken prisoner—in his own words,

> I taken was, as deastney had decreed.

And we may note how he speaks of the Duke of Somerset, as uncle to the 'renowned — of grace,' noble King Edward VI. Advancing into Mary's reign we find that he was in Ireland with Antony St. Leger in 1551. All this time he was evidently a soldier of Fortune—'Tam Marti quam Mercurio'—as he himself said, still ready to 'trail the pike,' but always ready to tread homewards, where it would appear his welcome was not long-lived, in an 'age of much religion, but of little morality,' and when men's words were not much to be trusted—

> So people's love is like new besomes oft,
> That sweeps all clean whilst broom is green and soft.

But for many points in his life, not to be found elsewhere and not easily reconciled by dates, the reader is referred to 'A Tragical Discourse of the Unhappy Man's Life,' which is, in reality, the story of his own misfortunes.

As far as I am able to make out, he must have been in Shrewsbury in 1559, when he would have been about forty years of age. Mention is made by the historians of Shrewsbury of a relief having been paid for him in 1558, and no doubt they are correct in their inference, as usual.

Meanwhile Churchyard's name as a poet was on the ascendant, and for some time 'The Tragedy of Tho. Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,' printed in the 'Myrroure for Magistrates,' was considered his, though in reality the author of it was Sir Thomas Challoner. The truth is, it was to 'SHORE'S WIFE' and 'WOLSEY' that he owed his literary fame. In the words of the 'Return from Parnassus'—

> Hath not Shore's wife, although a light-skirts she,
> Given him a chaste, long lasting memory?

Hence, when the 'Legende of Jane Shore' was added in 1563,

Baldwyn says, 'This was so well lyked, that all together exhorted me instantly to procure Maister Churchyarde to undertake and to penne as many moe of the remaynder as myght by any meanes be attaynted at his handes'; which compliment proves, says Mr. Haslewood, 'that the author was a new candidate, and upon the signatures being added in 1571, we find his name affixed to "Shore's Wife," in full, *Tho. Churchyard*, to distinguish it from the abbreviation for Thomas Challoner.' And thus, he spoke modestly of himself when he said, 'If any other title had been given to my trifles than the proper name of *Chips*, men might have hoped for graver matter than the nature of my verses can produce.'[1] A curious coincidence relative to his lines on Wolsey has been before alluded to in these pages, and so has likewise his 'Description and Discourse of Paper.' One is inclined to suppose, from the words, 'The Setting forth of a paper-mill, built near Darthford by a High German, called Mr. Spilman, Jeweller to the Queen,' that it must be one of the earliest paper-mills erected in England. So thought Phillips and Owen, both following old Stow the Chronicler. Sir John Spillman died in 1607, and in his garden at Dartford were planted the two first lime-trees seen in England. He had, no doubt, an eye to the use of the bass or bast in his manufactures.

It appears that Churchyard withdrew from war and sheathed his sword in 1572. Within two years he was in attendance, at 'Bristowe,' as court-poet, on Elizabeth—that is, in 1574—on which occasion, referring to his 'frigid conceits and bald rhymes,' Chalmers notes, 'While Elizabeth thus sat in the seats of Bristowe, listening to such coarse flattery, Spenser was one-and-twenty, without any production of his Muse, and Shakespeare was only ten years old, without feeling where his genius was to lead him.'

It was upon this occasion, and looking to her Majesty's intended visit to Shrewsbury, that 'Sir Henry Sidney, one of his numerous patrons, recommended him for the same service to this the place of his nativity.' The visit of the queen, as we have seen above, did not take place, 'because of deathe'; but the following is among the town accounts—

'Given Mr. Churchyard in rewarde, beinge sent unto us by my lord p'sident with letters conc'ninge the cominge of the Queene's Ma^tie^ to this towne, by the assent of the aldermen and counsellors, £3. 6. 8.'

Passing over many intervening years, in no way connected, apparently, with Shrewsbury, we come to 1587, in which the book so often referred to in these pages—'THE WORTHINESS OF WALES'—was published. I shall have occasion to refer to it again with reference to the 'Plays' acted in the Quarry. Meanwhile it will be ample to remark that another part was promised but never completed. It ends thus: 'Here endeth my first booke of the Worthiness of Wales: which being well taken, will encourge me to set foorth another; in whiche worke, not only the rest of the shieres (that now are not written of) shal be orderly put in print, but likewise all the ancient armes of gentlemen there in general, shal be plainely described and set out, to the open vewe of the worlde, if God permit me life and health, towards the finishing of so good a labour.' In the 'Bibliotheca Grenvilliana' it is stated, I know not on what authority (Heber Catalogue, part iv. p. 367, is referred to): 'This early piece of topographical poetry and history was left unfinished by the author on account of illness.' It may be added here that the reader will find a good deal of mixed information about Churchyard in the 'Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica,' a valuable book.

Chalmers remarks pithily: 'In 1588, when everyone drew his sword to oppose the Armada, Churchyard, a professed soldier, only seems to have drawn his pen. He was now 68, when the military spirit generally evaporates in tales twice told of youthful feats in the adventurous field.'

After all his labours, in the year 1593, he appears to have received a settled pension from the queen, than which nothing could have been more seasonable; for in this year it was that he published his 'Challenge,' in which, in the Epistle Dedicatory 'to the Right Hon. Sir John Wolsey, Knight, Secrutary for the Latin tung to the Queen's Majesty,' he speaks thus plaintively, but in no unmanly spirit:

'The long travel and tearing out of life in this wearisome pilgrimage having brought me now almost to the end of my

journey, makes me glad to be rid of the burdens of my mind, and the labours of my body; the one never free from studey, the other seldom voyde of toyle, and yet both of them neither brought great benefitte to the life, nor blessing to the soule: in which smal rest and unquietness many sorrowful discourses in my days have i written, and numbers of books i have printed; and because they shall not be buried with me i *challenge* them as my children to abide behinde me in the world,' &c. It should be added here that the Epistle Dedicatory is followed by a preface, to which is prefixed 'A new kind of a Sonnet,' complimentary to Spenser, ending with the lines which follow :—

> Then, gentle world, I sweetely thee beseech,
> Call Spenser now the spirit of learned speech.
> CHURCHYARD'S *Good Will.*

Churchyard survived longer than is generally supposed—until after the accession of King James, for there is a 'Pæan Triumphant' of his on the king's entry, March 15, 1603.[1] In the words of Chalmers: 'Arrived at length at the advanced age of 84, Churchyard died in Westminster about the 1st of April, 1604, and was certainly buried, as the parish register evinces, on the 4th day of the same month, in the Quire of St. Margaret's Church, near his favourite Skelton, and not in the church porch, according to the ludicrous epitaph in Camden's "Remains."'[2] That epitaph I extracted long ago. It is as follows :

> Come, Alecto, and lend me thy torch,
> To find a Churchyard in the Church Porch;
> Poverty and Poetry this tomb doth enclose,
> Therefore, Gentlemen, be merry in prose.

So much for the old Court poet, whose life Chalmers concludes with two of his own lines, than which nothing could be more apt—

> The chiefest jewel of our life is Virtue's land well won,
> Which lives within the other world, when fame of this is done;

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[1] Bliss, *Athen. Ox.* p. 734.

[2] Chalmers, p. 48. See Bridge's *Restitution*, vol. ii. 8.

adding at the same time, very justly, 'Much has been done, during recent times, to make Antony à Wood's catalogue more perfect. And I have now made one more effort to ascertain the chronological collection of the literary labours of a man who wrote during seven-and-fifty years of woe and wretchedness, still more full and precise.'[1] We owe much to Mr. Chalmers.

In closing these remarks on the old Poet of Shrewsbury I may throw out a surmise, that in his 'Good Will,' 'Sad and heavy Verses in the Nature of an Epitaph for the Loss of the Archbishop of Canterbury'—one of his latest publications—when he speaks of Whitgift as

Mild, soft, and sweete, like *conduit water cleere*,

he may have alluded to the time-honoured conduits of the ancient town. Whether or not, Whitgift died at Lambeth, 1603–4, aged 72, and was buried at Croydon.

My opinion is that he thought of the Abbey Mills, or at least of mills on his native stream, when he said—

The force of flood turns round the water-mill.

The man that wrote that line, so vividly and shortly expressed, had watched some over-shot water-mill (like that of my poor dead friend, E. Martin's, a sketch of which hangs in my dining-room), dreamily, no doubt, but with a great addition to his present happiness and content of mind—for what so lulling and musical as running water and the ripple of the gravels on the shallows, and the blob of the speckled trout as he takes the fly?

And so, fare thee well, good old Thomas Churchyard, no poetaster, as some will, but the good old time-honoured poet of Shrewsbury town:

ALL HAVE NOT FAME THAT WORTHY ARE THEREFOR!

Having mentioned the CONDUITS, at which I have so often drunk as a boy, in connection with the name of Churchyard,

[1] See pp. 52, 53, 56.

the extracts following from Archdeacon Owen's 'Summary,' may be acceptable to the general reader:

'Adjoining the Market House is one of the Conduits which furnish the inhabitants with excellent spring-water. When the town first procured this great convenience is not known, but it is probable that a partial supply was obtained from some ancient aqueducts belonging to the friars, who were always anxious for the possession of good water, as appears from the numerous grants of water-courses to almost all their convents. An ancient record, dated 1569, relates that "the common field belonging to the towne of Shrewesburie called *beyond the walles*, was put to farme for ten yeares, at a redd rose yearlie, unto three of the burgesses, and theye tharuppon chargydd to brynge the water in leaden pypes for the conduit, at a certayne day, to run in certyn places in the sayde towne." The water was accordingly brought from a fine spring called *Broadwell*, in a field near Crow Meole.[1] The pipes for the first 700 yards were, by the agreement, to weigh 28 lbs. each yard, and to be two inches and three quarters in bore; the next 700 yards to weigh 22 lbs. each, and to be two inches in bore: the last to weigh 16 lbs., and to be one inch and a half in the bore. The adventurers were to have all the lead and stone belonging to the old conduit excepting the cisterns on Mardol Head and Wyle Cop, which proves that Shrewsbury had some considerable supply of spring-water before this time. The work was completed in 1574, and the conduits were opened at Mardol Head, Single Butchers' Row,[2] Green Market, High Street, and Wyle Cop.

'The first reservoir was placed under a shop at the north end of the Butchers' Row, in 1743; this was removed to Claremont Hill, and fixed against the Town Wall; when that

[1] Crow Meole, or Monk Meole, as has been said before, formed a part of Bishop Clinton's endowment of Buildwas Abbey, temp. Richard I. See Eyton's *Ant.* vi. 359. He makes no mention, however, of the Aqueduct. The leaden pipes, no doubt, were made of the Snailbeach lead. It was the Greek κρουνὸς and σωλήν, the Latin *silanus*, as in Lucret. 'Corpora silanos ad aquarum strata jacebant' (vi. 1263).

[2] As distinguished from the Double Butchers' Row, like the *Via de' Due Macelli* of Rome. See Wild's *Last Winter in Rome*, pp. 46, 210.

was demolished for the erection of the new church of St. Chad, the present neat reservoir was built opposite to the house of new Quarry Keeper. In 1669 stone conduits were erected in the Green Market, Wyle Cop, and Mardol, but these from their size being obstructions to the streets, were removed in 1704, and the present wooden ones supplied their places. The springs of the conduit had run so low in 1744, that no water came to the town for several months, occasioned by a precedent dry season.' It is added in a note, 'In the year 1652 the Corporation ordered pumps to be sunk in Dog Lane, Butcher's Row, High Street, near Stearman's Hall, and St. John's Hill.'

The supply of water from the Severn was quite a different concern, and the account of it is given in the same accurate and interesting volume, under the head of 'The Cross,' on the High Pavement, notorious for the meetings there on Corpus Christi Day, infamous for its barbarous executions.

I may add that on the last royal visit of James II. in 1687, the painting of the conduit on the Wyle Cop cost 1*s.*, and an order was given that the conduits should run with wine the day his Majesty came to town.

The Sidney Family—as connected with Shrewsbury.

The first of the Sidney family connected with Shrewsbury was Sir Henry. This remarkable man—'skilled,' says Antony à Wood, 'in many languages, and a great lover of learning,' the friend of Edward VI., and the father of Sir Philip—who was President of Wales during the greater part of Elizabeth's reign, and some time (for nine years, at various intervals) Deputy of Ireland, on one occasion, as my Talking Friend informed me, had passed through the valley of the Rea, on a visit to the Castle of Caux. 'They did not stop,' he added, 'but there was a great cavalcade, and there was no mistaking Sir Henry as he spoke affably with those around him, for he was a man of mark every way'; this anticipates the high character which is given of him by all who have mentioned his name.

The head of the family, Sir William, was chamberlain to King Henry II., and came with him from Anjou. He died A.D. 1188, 35 Henry II., and was buried at the abbey of Lewes. But it is not with the earlier branches of the family that these pages are concerned, but with Sir Henry and Sir Philip. What relates to the former is given by Sir Egerton Brydges from an early edition of the 'Collins' Peerage,' edited in 1735, and it is inserted here as being a very good summary.

'He was,' saith Hollingshed, 'from his infancy, bred and brought up in the Court with Prince Edward, even as a companion, and many times a bedfellow, with him. He was four times made Lord Justice of Ireland, and thrice Deputy of that realm, which is much indebted to him for his wisdom and valour. For besides many other monuments yet surviving his equal and just government, he first devised and prudently executed the plot for the distribution of the Irish counties into shires, and repaired the Castle of Dublin, used a long time before by mechanical persons, and left the same a convenient and fit home for the Governor to live in, to which it has ever since been applied ; and also built rooms in the said Castle to preserve the records of the kingdom. He likewise caused the Irish statutes, to his own time, to be printed, and pacified several rebellions, and that not with so much rigour as excellent conduct. He died at Ludlow on the 5th of May, 1586, aged fifty-seven years, wanting a month and fifteen days, at which time he was Lord President of the Principality of Wales, and Lord Deputy of Ireland ; and the Queen being certified thereof ordered William Dethick, Garter King of Arms, to prepare all things appertaining to his office for his funeral. Accordingly, Garter and the other heralds coming to Worcester, ordered the corpse, robed with velvet, to be brought from Ludlow, which was solemnly conveyed into the Cathedral Church at Worcester, and there placed. And after a sermon preached by one of his Chaplains, the corpse was conveyed into a chariot covered with velvet, hung with escutcheons of his arms, &c., and being accompanied by Mr. Garter, and the other heralds, with the principal domestics of the deceased, and officers of the court

at Ludlow, they proceeded on their journey to Penshurst, where, on Tuesday, 21st June, 1586, he was interred in the church of that place, attended from his home by a noble train of Lords, knights, gentlemen, and ladies.'

Such was the great statesman so valued by Elizabeth, who sometimes treated him scurvily for telling her the truth, keeping him likewise short of funds when in Ireland, as appears so painfully in his manly letters—the man of whom De Quadra, writing to Philip II., says that he was 'a high-spirited, noble sort of person, and one of the best men that the Queen has about the Court'; 'none understood the temper of the Irish nation so completely, or managed it so judiciously,' for, says Lloyd in his 'Statesmen and Favorites,' 'he first studied and then ruled the people, making himself first master of their humour, and then of their government'; the man of whom Campion says in his 'Historie of Ireland,' 'Hee found the realm distempered with O'Neale's rebellion, and the same did extinguish,' adding presently, 'he was honoured at the point of his going with such recourse, pompe, musicke, shewes and enterludes, as no man remembereth the like. With innumerable harty prayers, and with that wish of his returne, whereof but few governors in these last 60 years have held possession. The man was surely much loved of them, from his first office of Treasurer in the second year of Queen Mary; stately, without disdaine; familiar, without contempt; very continent and chast of body; no more than enough liberal, learned in many languages, and a great lover of learning, perfect in blazoning of arms, skilful of antiquities, of wit fresh and lively, in consultations very temperate, in utterance happy, which his experience and wisdom hath made artificial, a preserver of many, a father to his servants; both in war and peace of commendable courage.'

Such was the man whom Elizabeth, in her littleness and in her greatness, in her seldom liberality and often penuriousness, delighted to honour. And from all I have ever read of him, or could read, I consider him to have been one of the greatest men of his day in his administrative capacity, and I cannot but think that a most interesting memoir, or picture

of an honest statesman—not fitted for these summary pages—might be thrown together for the benefit of our people, from the Sidney Papers and other documents, yet accessible. The memorial of such men, to whom the concurrent testimony of all historians gives its unvarnished tribute of praise, should not be lost sight of.

In passing on from this great man's general to his local history, I will add here that his last letter was to the Earl of Leicester, wishing that Philip, his son, might not go to serve in Flanders (it is dated Dublin, August 1, 1578), and that one of his sisters, Frances, wife of Thomas Ratcliff, Earl of Sussex, left the name of Sidney as a legacy to Cambridge. She was the founder of Sidney Sussex College.

But to turn to his visits to the old town as President of the Marches, where it is said he found a good counsellor in Whitgift, then Bishop of Worcester, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of great aptitude for business.

He is said to have received his appointment as President of the Marches in the second year of the reign of Elizabeth, and it would appear from documentary evidence (particularly alluded to before in these pages) that his visits to Shrewsbury were almost yearly ones. The data for such as we have mentioned with all be found in the historians so often referred to—and so much to be relied on. The first mention of his coming here is in the year 1561, and he was here in August 1562, when a payment of 12*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* was paid 'on account of his favour to the town.' But it is in 1571 that the old MS. Chronicle relates more fully how 'he came through the Town from Ireland, of which country he was the Lord Deputy, towards the parliament,' and how 'the shermen made an onset upon him to have his help against the drapers, who had obtained an act for buying of Welsh Clothe to be at lyberties—entirely a local mattyr.' The year following he was likewise here, and the usual presents for favour were again offered. In the year 1573, on his coming from London, 'at the foot of Wyle Cop was an excellent oration made unto him by one of the Scollars of the Free Scoole'—the same year, that is, when he came with the 'bysshopp of Coventrie and Lytchfeld as speciall commyssioners for to see an order

and reformacion in the churches accordynge to the Queen's Majestie's injunctions,' for illustration of which the reader is referred to our historians.

It is something remarkable that in this year's accounts the name of Sir Philip is first mentioned, because his name stands thus on the register of the scholars at Shrewsbury School, where he was entered 'Anno Domini 1564, 16 Cal. Nov.' The items in the accounts were thus, 'Spente and geven to Mr. Phillipe Siddney at his coming to this towne with my lord p'sident his father, in wine and cakes and other things, 7^s 2^d.' One wonders whether they were Shrewsbury cakes! It was in the year following that Elizabeth, as we have seen before, was expected in Shrewsbury, on which occasion Sir Henry recommended to them Churchyard as their poet.

But the great and most famed visit of the great President of the Marches to Shrewsbury was for the Feast of St. George in 1581, the full account of which is given by Phillips from Dr. Taylor's Collection of MSS.—the summary, however, in our chief historians will better suit our purpose; it is given in full:

'In 1581, Sir Henry Sidney, as a knight of the Garter, kept the feast of St. George (April 23) here with great splendour. He marched in solemn procession from the Council-house to St. Chad's Church. The stalls of the choir appear not to have been yet removed, and on this occasion they were decorated with the arms of the knights, in imitation of St. George's Chapel at Windsor; and here Sir Henry sat in his proper stall, one near that set apart for the Queen, in passing which he made the same reverence as if her Majesty had been actually present. We should be much mistaken if we attributed all this ceremony to mere love of parade; it was designed, no doubt, to impress the people with a lively notion of the sovereign's pre-eminence. Divine service was then "sung by note"; and in the evening the Lord President "began the feast," and kept open house.

'A week after this, on the first day of May, the four masters of the Free Schools entertained his lordship with a costly banquet after supper in the school garden. We must not infer from this expression that the banquet took place at

night, for in all probability his lordship supped about five o'clock in the afternoon. On the day following, the scholars, to the number of three hundred and sixty mustered in the Gay, with their masters, and the head boy, or "general," with the captains, addressed him in speeches, importing how valiantly they would defend their country, and even this juvenile spectacle was not, perhaps, without its political bearing. Our great Queen, by her will and by her faith stood opposed to the Roman Catholic powers of Europe, and the King of Spain was even now making those large strides to universal dominion, of which the subjugation of England was to form one of the preliminary measures. It was, therefore, not unworthy of the care of the eminent statesman to free us, to foster in the rising generation a spirit of resistance to foreign aggression, which might be reflected back upon all elder spectators, and excite a patriotic ardour for their religion and liberties.'

> The towne doth stand, most part, upon a hill,
> Built well and fayre, with streates both large and wide;
> And houses such, where strangers lodge at will,
> *As long as that the Counsell lists abide*;
> Both firm and cleane the streates are there throughout,
> With conduits cleere, and wholesome water springs;
> And who that lists to walke the towne about,
> Shall finde therein some rare and pleasant things;
> But chiefly there the ayre so sweete you have,
> As in no place ye can no better crave.

Such was the town, so beautiful for situation, in which the President of the Marches had his residence, and none can visit it and its grand old ruins without being smitten with the loveliness of the scenery by which it is surrounded. I had not been there for five and thirty years till 1863, when I visited it once more, and to me it had lost none of its fascination.

Of the presence of the Prince of Wales there mention has been made in an earlier page, and Hall in his Chronicles tells us, as quoted by Mr. Wright in his useful little Sketch, that he was sent there 'for justice to be doen to the Marches of Wales, to the end that by the authoritie of hys presence the wilde Welshmenne and evile disposed personnes should refrain

their accustomed murthers and outrages.' Not a pleasant picture of the Cymry, and one which would have much dissatisfied my Talking Friend's father—one, nevertheless, which is not much softened in the Autobiography of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

The most active Lord President of the Marches, previous to the times we are come to, was Roland Lee, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. It was not till the death of Sir John Williams, who was appointed on Elizabeth's accession, that Sir Henry Sidney succeeded, but in him we have the right man in the right place. It would seem that from the time of Bishop Lee things there had not mended. 'But Sidney inherited fully the spirit of that prelate, and under his rule, which lasted from 1559 till his death in Ludlow Castle on the 5th of May, 1586, the improvement of Wales and the borders made a rapid advance, although many parts remained still in a very unsettled state. Sidney made great repairs and alterations in the Castle; and in many parts still remaining we recognise the architectural style of his age.'

It does not belong to these pages to tell of the gradual decadence of the sometime great Court of the Marches at Ludlow, in which the Earl of Pembroke succeeded his father-in-law—that great statesman, Sir Henry. It may be enough to remark that on the installation of Prince Charles—that is, Charles the First—as Prince of Wales in 1616, it was kept with great state. One name, however, and for a reason to be presently stated, must not be passed over—the name, I mean, of John, Earl of Bridgewater, who was President in 1633 to his death in 1649, though latterly but by name, for in 1646, in Mr. Wright's words, 'Ludlow Castle was surrendered to the Parliamentary general, Sir William Brereton, and the Court of the Marches was not only virtually abolished, but after the king's death the very furniture of the Castle was appraised and sold.' The Court was restored on the accession of Charles II., but it was a mere *magni nominis umbra*, and the same may be said of it after 1688, for the governor of the Castle then was but a pensioner who resided in a few of the rooms, whilst 'the rest of it was neglected, and the whole gradually

allowed to fall into decay and ruin.' Many rooms, it is true, remained till Queen Anne's reign, but the order for unroofing it and stripping the buildings off the land in George I.'s time, quickly wrought its decay, and the travellers who may be desirous of having some relics of the grand Presidency must go to the Bull Inn and inspect the panelling there which is in the dining-room.

But the reason for mentioning the name of the Earl of Bridgewater here is because it was when he was there the celebrated 'Mask of Comus' was presented at the Castle, when Milton was a very young man of only twenty-six ; this was in 1634, though it was not published with his name till 1645. It turned, as is well-known, upon the Lady Alice's losing herself in Haywood Forest, and as long as a stone of the old ruin remains, Sir Henry Sidney's name and the name of Milton will be attached to it. The Council Chamber is supposed to be the room in which it was acted. The latest tradition mentioned is thus given in the last edition of Todd's 'Milton' [The son of the gentleman mentioned I knew very well ; he was the author of the ballad on 'Wild Humphrey,' referred to in a former page, and lived at Westfelton]—

'Mr. Doveston, of the Nursery, near Oswestry, who visited the Castle in 1768, has acquainted me that the floors of the Great Council Chamber were then pretty entire, as was the staircase. The covered steps leading to the Chapel were remaining, but the covering of the Chapel was fallen; yet the arms of some of the Lord Presidents painted on the walls were visible ; in the Great Council Chamber were inscribed on the wall a sentence from 1 Samuel xii. 3 ; all of which are now wholly gone. The person who shewed this gentleman the Castle informed him that by tradition the "Mask of Comus" was performed in the Council Chamber.'[1]

Thus much for great names—Sir Henry Sidney the Lord President of the Marches, for Milton and his undying fame, and for the magnificent ruins of the beautiful Castle of Ludlow, so fascinating in its decay.

[1] Todd, iv. 37.

Sir Philip Sidney.

And who that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise,
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Exalt, and agitate his labouring soul?
Say, who by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lull'd by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain, or where, with soften'd gaze,
The old gray stones the plaided chief surveys,
Can guess the high resolve, the cherish'd pain,
Of him whom passion rivets to the plain,
Where breath'd the gale that caught Wolf's happiest sigh,
And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's eye,
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dundee in 'faint huzzas' expired?

WORDSWORTH.

The life and death of that man were equally lovely. I do not think that there ever existed a more perfect human being.

SOUTHEY'S *Letters*, i. 315. January 25, 1680.

It does not fall within the scope of these pages to give an account of Sir Philip Sidney's works, several of which, such as his beautiful 'Defence of Poesie,' have been casually mentioned, together with his 'Astrophel and Stella'—'said to have been written,' says Antony à Wood, 'for the sake of one whom he entirely loved, viz. the Lady Riche, by whom was understood Philosba in the Arcadia'—but not to mention the latter work would be like leaving out the character of Hamlet in the play; the more so as so able a judge as Hallam, in his Introduction to the 'Literature of Europe,' says: 'The first good prose writer, in any positive sense of the word, is Sir Philip Sidney, whose ARCADIA appeared in 1590.' It does not, indeed, appear that any of his works were published in his lifetime.

This worldwide-known Pastoral Romance, as it has been called, is dedicated 'to my dear Lady and Sister, the Countess of Pembroke'—that sister Mary, who so closely resembled her brother in mind and feature, whom he loved so well, and to whom he says in the Preface, counting his idle work only as the spider's web, fit but to be swept away: 'You desired

me to do it, and your desire, to my heart, is an absolute commaundement.' Throughout life no one had such influence with him as she had—so that Spenser, in his 'Colin Clouts come home again,' only put into poetical numbers the praise that was her due.

> They all, quoth he, me graced goodly well,
> That all I praise; but in the highest place,
> Urania, sister unto Astrofell,
> In whose brave mynd, as in a golden cofer,
> All heavenly gifts and riches locked are—
> More rich than pearles of Ynde, or gold of Opher,
> And in her sexe more wonderfull and rare.[1]

All mouths seem opened wide to praise the memory of this excellent woman, and I think there is so much of truth in these words of one of Sidney's recent biographers that I venture to give them here: 'The truest and ablest women always walk through the world most noiselessly. Having endowment, richer, it may be, than any of which men can boast, they know that their wealth of mind is to be applied—not as that of men bound to use their talents in the busy, jostling world, but in the sacred privacy of home. It is harder to plod on through weary years, existing on influence often inappreciable, and seldom duly appreciated, upon sons, brothers, and husbands, who are thereby to be fitted for their battle in the open field. Yet thus, and thus only, the intellectual and moral life of mankind is preserved and extended from generation to generation. Those women who come out of their closets, who mix in the great world's strife, and aim in any way to produce a direct and visible effect upon its progress, may do very memorable and thankworthy work; but the work is really less in its issue, and less honourable to themselves, than if they had wisely exercised their powers in the arming of others, as only high-souled women can arm them, for the contest in which, by necessity, manly strength of limb and fixedness of purpose fight with most effect.' Such was this marvellous woman, one who—

> Gave pediment and pillars, arch and corner stone of duty,
> Their own allotted place in the edifice of man.

[1] See v. 487 &c.

But to return to the 'Arcadia,' which it is said that, on 'his more retired judgment,' Sidney condemned to the fire, but which, says Lloyd in his 'Statesmen and Favorites,' 'wise men think will continue to the last conflagration.'

It is not necessary to look far back as to the origin of fictitious narrative, nor yet to the 'Theagenes and Charicleia' of Heliodorus, nor to question with over great nicety as to whom Sidney was most indebted to for his 'Arcadia.' But, not improbably, Lilly's 'Euphues' may have given his thoughts a turn this way. Being, however, discontented with the frivolities of Euphuism so much in vogue in Elizabeth's court—not to speak Euphuism and not to speak French implied pretty much the same rusticity and ignorance—he rubbed up his Italian fancies by turning over the pages of Sannazaro, the first edition of whose 'Arcadia' was published in 1502. Those, however, who are better read in the pages of old romance than I am seem to think that the 'Diana' of Montemayor is the book to which Sir Philip is most indebted. Whether or no, the 'Arcadia' of Sannazaro had the priority of date, and the fascination of its name; for the 'Diana' of Montemayor was not printed till 1560. I only need add here that the work of Heliodorus had been translated or turned into English prose by Thomas Underdown, and printed in 1577, and to this edition he probably alludes in the 'Defence of Poesie.'

Then comes the question of the literary value of the 'Arcadia,' of which Collins tells us, 'There is a room at Wilton, the lower pannels which are finely painted with a representation of the stories mentioned therein.'

Now, although his early friend and schoolfellow, Fulke Greville Lord Brooke, states, 'His end was not writing, even while he wrote, nor his knowledge moulded for tables or schools; but with his wit and understanding bent upon his heart, to make himself and others, not in words or opinions, but in life and action, good and quiet'; yet, for all this, after the publication of the 'Arcadia' there is no doubt, from the number of editions published (fourteen or fifteen, at least), that it was greatly valued, much studied, and much read; and this may be said with the most perfect justice, that if

Sidney himself was not a great writer (which I do not allow), he led the way to very great advances in our language ; and I think this abridged testimony of the historian Hallam, after all I have read upon the subject, is as fair as any.

'Walpole, who thought fit to display the dimensions of his own mind by announcing that he could see nothing remarkable in Sir Philip Sidney (as if the suffrage of Europe in what he admits to be an age of heroes were not a decisive proof that Sidney himself overtopped those sons of Anak), says of the "Arcadia," that "it is a tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance, which the patience of a young virgin in love cannot now wade through." We may doubt whether Walpole could altogether estimate the patience of a reader so extremely unlike himself, and his epithets, except perhaps the first, are inapplicable ; the "Arcadia" is more free from pedantry than most books of that age, and although we are now so accustomed to a more stimulant diet in fiction, that few would read it through with pleasure, the story is as sprightly as most other romances, sometimes, indeed, a little too much so ; for the "Arcadia" is not quite a book for "young virgins," of which some of its admirers by hearsay seem not to have been aware. By the epithet "pastoral" we may doubt whether Walpole knew much of this romance beyond its name ; but it has far less to do with shepherds than with courtiers, though the idea might probably be suggested by the popularity of the "Diana." It does not appear to me that the "Arcadia" is more tiresome and uninteresting than the generality of that class of long romances, proverbially among the most tiresome of all books ; and, in a less fastidious age, it was read, no doubt. It displays a superior mind, rather complying with a temperate taste than affected by it, and many pleasing passages occur, especially in the tender and innocent loves of Pyrocles and Philosba. I think it nevertheless, on the whole, inferior in sense, style, and spirit to the "Defence of Poesy."'

In this view taken by Hallam I entirely agree, nor do I know, in its way, a more delightful treatise than the 'Defence of Poesie,' which is especially worth the notice of all young students of the gentle craft, if they could be induced to read

it as they read the 'Poetica' of Aristotle or the 'Ars Poetica' of Horace. Surely it is well to say, 'the end of all earthly learning being virtuous action, those states that most serve to bring forth that, have a most just title to be princes over all the rest; wherein if we can show it rightly, the poet is worthy to have it before any other competitors.' So spake the man who could say that 'old-aged experience goeth beyond the fine-witted philosopher.' To which he adds, by-and-by: 'The poet is, indeed, the right popular philosopher. Whereof Æsop's fables give good proof, whose pretty allegories, stealing under the formal tales of beasts, make many, more beastly than beasts, begin to hear the sound of virtue from these dumb speakers'—an allusion to which Sidney is evidently partial.

What youth again would not be struck with the passage which follows?—

'Now, think, of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the human, conceits) is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect unto the way, as will entice any man to enter in to it; nay he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to press farther. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must bleed the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness, but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with or prepared for the well enchanting skill of music; and forsooth, he cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner; and, pretending no more, doth intend the weaning of the mind from wickedness to virtue, even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such others as have a pleasant taste; which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarbarum they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth'—a passage, I think, which rather tends to disprove the remark of Mr. Lloyd, that there was a want of humour in Sidney's character, as does the passage which follows, 'Certainly I must confess

mine own barbarousness. I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet, and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style, which being so evil appareled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?'

May not the same view be taken of the concluding paragraph?—

'But if (fie of such a but!) you be born so near the dull-making cataract of Nilus, that you cannot hear the planet-like music of Poetry; if you have so earth-creeping a mind, that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of Poetry; or rather, by a sort of rustical disdain, will become such a Mome, as to be a Momus of Poetry, then, though I will not wish unto you the ass's ears of Midas, nor to be driven by a Poet's verses, as Bupalus was, to hang himself; nor to be rhymed to death as it is said to be done in Ireland; yet thus much curse I must send you in the behalf of all Poets: that while you live, you live in love and never get fervour, for lacking skin of a sonnet; and when you die, your memory die from the earth, for want of an epitaph.'

I will only add with reference to this beautiful Treatise that if the reader has time and inclination to go through the whole of the 'Miscellanea Poetica Anglicana Antiqua,' beginning with the 'Art of Poesie, English, by George Puttenham,' he will soon see the wide difference there is between this and all the rest.

For the rest of Sir Philip Sidney's works—his 'Astrophel and Stella,' and his 'Miscellaneous Poems'—the reader is referred to them as a whole, and, if completely read in the literature of the Elizabethan age, he will be able to form his own conclusion. The question as to Pamela's Prayer, in the Third Book of the 'Arcadia,' which was foisted into an edition of the 'Eikon Basiliké,' does not belong to this place. Milton's Εἰκονοκλάστης is familiar to us all, but I do not, for all that, and for all that has been written on one side to the other, think the question altogether easy of solution, however doubtful Gauden's character may have been. Burnet in his 'History

of his Own Times'—in his 'Summary of Affairs before the Restoration'—says that he was obliged to leave the question 'under the same uncertainty in which he found it.' It is easy to ask, Was it disingenuously inserted by Milton? Did he insist on Dugard the printer's inserting it as an atonement for his rashness in printing the volume? Party ran high, and recriminations were mutual; but the fact remains that no volume ever ran through so many editions in a short time, and had it been printed before the martyrdom of Charles, it would probably have saved the shedding of his innocent blood. Whatever his faults, which were many, there was no need that it should have been poured out like water at Whitehall. I know nothing better in its way now than the conclusion of Charles I.'s reign in Hume, in which he refers to the 'Eikon Basiliké' and balances the evidence. Milton even was constrained to confess that the effects of it were as exciting as those caused by Antony reading to the tumultuous Romans the will of Cæsar. 'The Icon,' adds Hume, 'passed through fifty editions in a twelvemonth; and independent of the great interest taken in it by the nation, as the supposed production of their murdered sovereign, it must be acknowledged the best prose composition which at the time of its publication was to be found in the English language.' There is no cause to review these words.

Prefixed to the 'Sidneiana' the reader will find an autograph letter of Sir Philip Sidney, which I mention here because twice at least he speaks of handwriting. To Languet he writes of his own, saying: 'The more I write, the worse I get to write'; but he writes to his brother Robert, 18th October, 1580: 'I would, by the way, your worship would learn a better hand. You write worse than I do, and I write evil enough.' On comparing the autograph letter with what he says here Sir Philip appears too hard upon himself. I, certainly, could find no fault with it, for it might be said of mine as Aubrey said of Waller's: 'He writes a lamentable hand, as bad as the scratching of a hen.' The older one grows the greater one finds the evil of bad writing.

Much has been said and written at different times of Sidney's Oak, which was planted on his birthday. Ben Jonson

tells of it in his well-known lines on Penshurst, Waller tells of it in his lines on Penshurst, and others many—but I will the rather transcribe here the feeling inscription of Robert Southey :—

FOR A TABLET AT PENSHURST.

Are days of old familiar to thy mind,
O reader? Hast thou let the midnight hour
Pass unperceived, whilst thou in fancy lived
With high-born beauties and enamour'd chiefs,
Sharing their hopes, and with a breathless joy
Whose expectation touched the verge of pain,
Following their dangerous fortunes? If such lore
Hath ever thrill'd thy bosom, thou wilt tread,
As with a pilgrim's reverential thoughts,
The groves of Penshurst : Sydney here was born.
Sydney, than whom no gentler, braver man
His own delightful genius ever feigned,
Illustrating the vales of Arcady
With courteous courage and with loyal loves.
Upon his natal day an acorn here
Was planted : it grew up a stately oak,
And in the beauty of its strength it stood
And flourish'd, when his perishable part
Had moulder'd, dust to dust. That stately oak
Itself hath moulder'd now, but Sydney's fame
Endureth in his own immortal works.

I repeated these lines beneath the wide-spreading shade of my aged and Talking Friend. On hearing them with grave and sedate acquiescence, he only remarked—evidently considering his own length of days—'But a short-lived Oak!' and he seemed like one who might have thought, if not said :—

The secret dews of many a starry night
Feed the vast Ocean's stately ebb and flow ;
The leaf is restless where the branch is slight,
Still are the boughs whose shades stretch far below.

His 'clefted now, and withered boughs' implied hundreds of years—not 'a hundred years'—and, in truth, like many of us, he was vain of his antiquity ; but he was Heart of Oak after all, and delighted to hear tell of such a peerless knight as SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

OLD PLAYS *in Shrewsbury, patronised, when he was Lord-Deputy of Ireland and President of the Marches of Wales, by* SIR HENRY SIDNEY, *not dissimilar in their kind to the* OLD MAISTERIES, MIRACLE PLAYS, MISTERIES *or* MYSTERIES, *&c., of Coventry and Chester.*

This chapter would hardly be complete without saying something on this subject, especially as every old Shrewsbury boy has heard traditions in his boyhood which he longed to get to the bottom of but had not time. What boy ever had time to do everything—two copies of verses a week and a theme, besides regular lessons—and those *impositions*, which are, as the logicians speak, *inseparable accidents*? I never knew that boy, and the chances are, if there ever was such a splendid exception, he never in after life became a Sir Henry or a Sir Philip Sidney.

The first play on record, as performed in the good old town, was in the reign of Henry VII., when that king was on a visit here from Ludlow Castle. This was in 1493-4, when, according to the town accounts, 'wine was given to the Lord Prince at the play in the Quarroll, 106*s.* 9*d.*' On which the historians remark: 'of the nature of this play we can communicate no information.' In all probability it was a religious mystery or miracle-play, the only species of dramatic exhibition then known, for the 'Novelty,' the next stage of the art, does not appear to have been introduced before the following reign. 'The Play or Mystery of the Assumption' was acted before the Prince at the Abbeygate of Chester in 1493. The 'Quarroll' in which he viewed the play, and in which his retinue consumed such a profusion of liquor, was doubtless the quarry, and most likely the dingle there, called the Dry Dingle, near the Augustine Friars, a place not ill-suited to such a representation, and which has been referred to before in connection with the life of our town poet, old Palæmon, or Thomas Churchyard.

The next payment in the town accounts is '10*s.*' given to the players at the Feast of Pentecost in 1510. The undermentioned sacred drama our historians think to have been

the last 'exactly of this sort which was ever enacted in the Quarry,' for these miracle plays were already out of fashion in the metropolis, and had been succeeded by the moralities which retained some of the serious character of their predecessors. The entry alluded to is under 1516 and runs thus:

'Wine, apples, wafers, and other new-fashioned dainties, given and spent upon the Abbot of Shrewsbury and his servants, for the honour of the town, at the play and show of the "Martyrdom of Feliciana and Sabina" in the Whitsun-week in the Quarry behind the walls, *2s.* And in reward given to them that played the same martyrdom, *10s.*' To this they add in the next page that players were hired by the Wardens of C—— to enact the Corpus Christi play, but they state 'we have no proof that Shrewsbury had its Corpus Christi play,' and, no doubt, these plays brought a great concourse of people both to Chester and Coventry. Dugdale knew some people who in their younger days had been witnesses of these pageants. Naogeorgus begins his account of the Festival in these words:

> Corporis hinc veniunt Christi celeberrima festa:
> Quorum quis dicat ludos, moremque prophanum!

From very early times, as it was customary with the boys of St. Paul's, so was it with those of Shrewsbury School, as we saw under the mention of that excellent citizen and schoolmaster, Maister Ashton. If a Whitsun or other play were to be acted, and the actors were not well paid *lusores* or *interluders*, they were sure to bear their part in it. And so, till later days, no President of the Marches could pay the old town a visit without the boys taking a part in every pageant—a fact which has likewise been mentioned before—especially with reference to Sir Henry Sidney, and hence we are not unnaturally led to look backwards to the origin of these plays and pageants, and are reminded of the words of Perdita in the play:—

> Methinks I play as I have seen them do
> In Whitsun pastorals.

And the first question, because so intimately connected

with the Old Town, and to which my Talking Friend constantly alluded under the name of 'THE SHOW' is this—was the old Shrewsbury show at any time, and in earlier days, connected with the mysteries and the Corpus Christi pageants? those days, which at Coventry and Chester stamped June 14 with a marvellous celebration. Individually, I am much inclined to think, though there is no authority for a positive statement, that such was the case; and because, throughout the valley of the Rea, the Shrewsbury Show was notorious, and everyone went to it that could, and all husbandry was suspended for the day, and because it was the delight of children and of grown-up children, who rejoiced to see their offsprings' innocent pleasures, I will quote at length good old Archdeacon Owen's account of it:—

'It was from remote times customary for all the Companies to unite in celebration of the Day of Corpus Christi, the Feast of the Holy Sacrament or Body of our Lord, one of the most splendid Festivals of the Roman Church, as their grand anniversary. Preceded by their Masters and Wardens, and graced with colours and devices, they attended the Bailiffs and members of the Corporation, who with the Canons of St. Chad and St. Mary, the Friars of the Five Convents, and the Parochial Clergy followed the Holy Sacrament, which was borne by Priests under a rich canopy of velvet or silk to a stone cross without the Town, probably that called the Weeping Cross. Here all joined in bewailing their sins and in chanting forth petitions for a plentiful harvest. They then proceeded in the same order to the Church of St. Chad, where each Company had a particular place in the choir, and a grand Mass was celebrated. Several of the trades were obliged to provide necessaries for this procession, particularly wax tapers, which were carried before the Host and afterwards deposited on the altar of St. Michael in St. Chad's Church. The procession was followed by three days of disport and recreation, as they were termed, either in the ensuing week or at an early time agreed upon by the several Wardens. These were held upon the piece of ground called Kingsland, where each Company had its "ARBOUR," and where all regaled the Bailiffs and Corporation. After the Reformation the religious cere-

mony was of course abolished, but one day of entertainment is still observed under the denomination of the Show, and is always on the Second Monday after Trinity Sunday. The Companies assemble about noon before the Castle accompanied by their Wardens, flags, devices, and music, most of them having also a man on horseback, gaudily dressed, called the King, intended originally, perhaps, for a representation of the monarchs who granted their charters. Thus the King of the Cloth-workers personates Edward IV.; the King of the Masons, Henry VIII.; the Barbers march with a Queen, perhaps our celebrated Lady Elizabeth. The devices are emblematical of the trades. The Sadlers had a caparisoned horse; the Smiths an Armourer's axe, preceded by a knight in complete harness, the Hatters and Furriers by an American Indian; the Skinners by the figure of a stag, large as life, attended by huntsmen sounding bugle horns. The procession moves over the Welsh Bridge to Kingsland, where each Company has its enclosed arbour, or pavilion, adorned with the arms of the Company, in which a cold dinner is prepared. These are visited by the Mayor and Corporation, who used formerly to wear their robes of office on this occasion. They go on horseback, preceded by the beadles, crier, &c., and bareheaded, and are all hospitably entertained at the arbours of the respective trades. The day is spent in festivity, and towards the close of the evening the companies leave this delightful spot, returning to the Town over the Abbey Bridge. Several of these have ceased to take part in the procession, and this ancient pageant, a lively picture of the taste of former days, is gradually approaching its dissolution, for which reason only a more particular description has been given of it.'

Many a year has passed and gone since I saw this ancient procession—as far as I can make out it must have been in 1813 or 1814—but the impression on a child's mind of such a sight is never obliterated. Wonderfully grand all seemed to be, especially the man in armour and the Queen. Many times also in my boyhood did I visit Kingsland—the old name of the kings of Mercia's domains—but even then, as I well call to mind, the arbours were not well kept up and wanted many repairs. One of the earliest wasp-nests I ever

helped to take was close to one of them. They tell me that the old mutilated statues of Crispin and Crispianus still remain by the Shoemakers' Arbour, and that the old time-worn rhymes may still be deciphered:

> We are but images of stonne,
> Doe us no harme—we can do nonne.

But to return to the mysteries and early plays, which I will preface by two extracts, the first of which is from 'Black-friars, or the Monks of Old.'

'From the earliest ages,' says this writer, 'since Barbarianism has been dispelled like a gloomy fog from our shores, has acting and mummery from the hall of the palace to the village green formed a popular amusement among the English people.

'The famed Mystery Plays, for the most part performed within Monasteries at certain high Festivals, and enacted by the Conventuals, were the first to incite the passion for it. Next came the popular legends illustrated by laymen as well as devotees. After these great figures of English history were placed upon the stages of portable theatres, and enunciated by strolling players; while again, succeeding the latter were certain stories selected for representation from Greek and Roman writers. At times the performances were simplified by being confined to some extraordinary allegory. Though dramatic art was for a long time in its rude infancy it is a mistake to suppose no genius was exhibited. Many of the Church Plays, denominated Miracle or Mystery Plays, from their generally being of a religious character, exhibited great power of thought and developed the human passions most forcibly, and with good moral effect. Scenic display, too, was not unknown, for in the churches where these Mystery Plays were represented, and in the palaces where masques and mummery pageants were exhibited, scenery of no common or dauby kind, and showing considerable mechanical skill, was much in vogue.'

The next extract is from Wright's 'Archæological Essays.'

'Of the great English collections which have been preserved, two, the Townley and the Chester Mysteries, were

probably composed about the end of the fourteenth century, or early in the fifteenth. The rigid moralists and disciplinarians of the Church seem at all times to have set their faces against such exhibitions, and the Wycliffite Reformers of the fourteenth century declaimed against them with considerable vehemence; as zealously, indeed, as any of the preachers against the immorality of the stage in modern times. One of the Reformers has left us a discourse against the miracle plays, which is preserved in a volume of Wycliffite sermons of the end of the fourteenth century, and gives us a curious idea of the prevalence and popularity of such performances at that time. The writer pleads the sinfulness of turning God's deeds and miracles into jest and game, and alleges, with reason, that they were calculated to destroy our reverence for holy things and to weaken people's belief; and he combats the arguments urged in their favour that they were intended to promote the worship of God, and make people familiar with sacred subjects. The preaching of the Wycliffites, however, appears to have had no effect, and the Mysteries and Miracle Plays continued to be extremely popular during the whole of the following century and until the Reformation.'

Such is a general statement. I will now enter into some particulars, only stating by the way that we are so far fortunate now in this, that we have not, like some chaplains of old, the necessity imposed upon us of composing miracle plays, or mysteries, as well as sermons, so giving rise to the old saw, expressed in many different shapes and forms of language.

> Perhaps it may turn out a song,
> Perchance turn out a sermon.

The Miracle Play—or, as it was afterwards called from the French, the Mystery, Maisterie, or Mistery—was certainly the origin of the English drama. As Thomas Warton states in his Third Dissertation, prefixed to the 'History of English Poetry': '*Mystery*, anciently used for a particular art, or state in general, is a specious and easy corruption of *maistery* or *mistery*; the English of the Latin *magisterium* or *artificium*: in French, *maistrise*, *mestier*, *mestire*; and in Italian, *magis-*

terio, in the same sense.' So did Warton rightly put it, though with others he still called the Miracle Plays Mysteries. But without pressing upon the name farther: 'The dramatic productions of this country,' says Collier, 'exist in no more ancient form than that of plays founded upon the Old and New Testaments, with additions from the apocryphal gospels. The legends of the lives of saints and martyrs appear also to have afforded subjects for exhibitions of the same kind. Their proper designation is Miracles, or Plays of Miracles.'

It would be interesting here to look back to the earlier revival of the drama in Christian times, when the heathen drama was proscribed as profane, and when St. Chrysostom even could say, skilled as he was in heathen lore, that the 'people heard a Comedian with much more pleasure than a Preacher of the Gospel.' It is a matter of history, well known, that when Julian (A.D. 362) issued an edict forbidding Christians to teach the classics, Apollinaris, father and son, the former priest and the latter bishop of Laodicea, put the Books of the Old Testament into poetry, and the New into the form of dialogues, after the manner of Plato—the two forming a series of sacred classics. But what belonged to each is not known. The only drama of this sort which has reached our times is the 'Christus Patiens.' It is found amongst the works of that Father, but is, and I think rightly, rejected by the Benedictine editors. I merely mention this by the way, lest I may be thought to have wilfully omitted a possible revival of the drama preceding what relates to England or France. The general reader may see the heads of the subject in Hone's 'Every Day Book,' under June 2, on 'The Origin of Religious Plays,' which I refer to with the greater pleasure, having just read what Dr. Raffles said of Hone when he came to his right mind.

Not impossibly, our Saviour's descent into hell, mentioned by Hone in his 'Manners and Customs of England,' may be our first miracle play: whether or not, the second would seem to have been the 'Play of St. Catherine,' composed by Geoffrey, a learned Norman, who was invited by Richard, the then Abbot of St. Albans, though at that time but a secular

person, to teach the school established there. For this he arrived too late, as the appointment was filled up, but established himself at Dunstable, where the play alluded to was brought out. He and the Abbot evidently continued on friendly terms, for when his play was enacted he borrowed capes and dresses for it from the Abbey. Unluckily— Matthew Paris reports—the night following Geoffrey's house was burnt, and together with it the *capæ chorales*. There is evidence that this play was brought out before he assumed the religious habit. He became Abbot of St. Albans in 1119, and died in 1146.

Our ancestors, evidently, were fond of scenic representations, and London, of all other cities, seems to have been much given to them, for Stow, in his 'Survey,' quoting William Fitstephen, who wrote before the year 1182, has these words: 'London, for the shows upon theatres and comical pastime, hath holy plays, representations of miracles, which holy confessors have wrought, or representations of torments, wherein the constancy of martyrs appeared.' Much was said for and against the introduction of religious subjects on the stage, with reference to which Matthew Paris said '*Miracula vulgariter appellamus.*' Warton and Collier both refer to the condemnation of them in the 'Manuel de Péché, which has recently been reprinted by the Roxburgh Club, and has been previously quoted in these pages. The mention of them by Chaucer and Piers Ploughman shows their great popularity. In the latter, when the Minorite would describe the holy lives of his brethren most like the poor apostles, he says, evidently pointing to the customs of the time—

> We haunten no tavernes,
> We hobeleth abouten;
> At markets and *miracles*
> We medeleth us never.

Strongly contrasted with which is the account the gay 'Wife of Bath' gives of herself, and how she spent her Lenten time when her husband was in London. Her delight being to wander from house to house, and to hear sundry tales—therefore, she says—

made I my visitations
To vigiles, and to processions,
To prechings eke, and to these pilgrimages,
To *plays of Miracles*, and mariages,
And wered upon my gay skarlet gites.

It may be mentioned in passing, as regards Coventry, where Queen Elizabeth stayed on her way to Shrewsbury that it was not likely that her visit to Kenilworth would be allowed to pass without what Robert Laneham calls 'their old storick sheow': something about which the reader will pick up from Sir Walter Scott's bewitching novel. But the reader must be admonished that this exhibition had nothing whatever to do with the old Mystery, to which, as Strutt observes, 'it did not bear the least analogy.' It was one like the Hock-Tuesday pageant.

In passing onwards from the Mysteries one very ancient one must yet be referred to—the well-known 'Guary Mystery of Cornwall, which appears to have existed from very early times, and is constantly alluded to. All Cornish readers will naturally turn at once to Carew's Survey, which I quote from Strutt's 'Sports and Pastimes,' not having the original at hand. In Cornwall, he says, the Miracle Plays were differently represented; they were not performed in the churches nor under any kind of cover, but in the open air, as we learn from Carew, whose words upon this subject are as follows: 'The Guary-miracle, in English a miracle-play, is a kind of interlude compiled in Cornish out of some Scripture history, with that grossness which accompanied the Roman *Vetus Comœdia*. For representing it they raise an earthen amphitheatre in some open field, having the diameter of this inclined plane some forty or fifty feet. The country people flock from all sides many miles off to hear and see it, for they have their devils and devices to delight as well the eye as the eare. The players conne not their partes without booke, but are prompted by one called the Ordinary, who followeth at their backs with the booke in his hands and telleth them what to say.' This species of amusement continued to be exhibited in Cornwall long after the abolition of the 'Miracles' and 'Moralities' in the other parts of the kingdom, and when the establishment of

regular plays had taken place. I suspect the Guary-miracle has been acted in one shape or another much later than this, and that many a good old Cornishman is at this moment ready to be 'billeted,' if wanted on an emergency at Fair or Wake, just like an old Sussex smuggler, for the fun of the thing, would run for the Ferring Brooks, if he heard of a cargo there.

As referring to the point with which I am no further concerned here I give the following from a recent volume relative to the ancient 'Horn,' or *Cornu-Walliæ* of England. Speaking of St. Just the writer says: 'An object of interest here is the old amphitheatre, or rather the remains of one, in which plays were enacted. These were written and spoken in the Cornish language, and were composed for begetting in the people a right notion of the Scriptures.' As the sacred persons of the Trinity were represented, much profanity must have prevailed in such spectacles. The circle was 126 feet in diameter ; the seats, which ran round the sides, consisted of six steps, each about one foot high. There were other similar structures in the county, and they were called *Plânan Guares*—places of sport or amusement—the name which still sticks to them.

'At Treguier,' says Mr. Tom Taylor in his introduction to the Breton Ballads, 'is the fountain head of the religious canticles which fill such a large space in the poetry of Brittany ; and at Lannion are still played, or have been played within living memory, " Breton Tragedies " like the old Celtic plays of our own Cornwall—historical as well as religious ; lasting often for three days, and holding spell-bound for many hours of each day peasant audiences assembled by thousands in the open theatre.'

In some shape or another in all countries there have been miracle-plays and mysteries, though under different names. To take one of our most recent travellers, M. Vambéry tells us in the account of Central Asia that before the sacred Mosque Misdjidi Divanbeghi at Bokhara, dervish, and meddah (public reciters) recount in verse and prose, and actors represent simultaneously the heroic actions of famous warriors and prophets ; to which there are never wanting

crowds of curious listeners and spectators.'[1] So is it in lands Christian or Moslem!

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that it is to the miracle or mystery play that we owe many expressions—to which Shakespeare was indebted, when in Hamlet he says, 'It out-herods Herod,' act iii. sc. 2. The allusion is, of course, to the murder of the Innocents.[2]

In closing this short account of the miracle or mystery plays, it should be mentioned that this was, perhaps, the form originally intended by Milton for his 'Paradise Lost': on this head the reader is referred to Mr. Todd's chapter—'An Inquiry into its Origin.' The Italian works referred to, and to which he is supposed to be indebted, are the 'Adamo' of Andreini, Troilo Lancetta's 'La Scena Tragica d'Adamo ed Eva,' and 'L'Adamo del Campanella.' The latter work is before me, and to it I should imagine the great religious poet owed little enough. The subject, however, is worth examination and Todd's remarks are suggestive.[3]

And this brings us to the last portion of what relates to the early drama.

The Moralities.

As we have seen, the miracle plays were first introduced when the mass of people were no scholars. But, says Warton, 'as these pieces frequently required the introduction of allegorical characters, such as Charity, Sin, Death, Hope, Faith, and the like, and as the common poetry of the times, especially among the French, began to deal much in allegory, at length plays were formed entirely consisting of such personifications. These were called Moralities.'[4]

We borrowed the term from the French, as they did from the Latin, and it is probable that with us they do not date much earlier than the time of Henry VI., 'having arrived at their height about the close of Henry VII.'s reign.'[5]

[1] See c. x. p. 173.

[2] See commentators, and Bishop C. Wordsworth, on 'Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible,' p. 76.

[3] Vol. i. p. 230, and 4th Edition c. ix. [4] Vol. ii. p. 75. [5] *Ibid.* iii. 190.

Again, to use the words of Mr. Collier, in his 'Annals of the Stage:' 'The word "Morality," applied to a dramatic representation, like the word "Mystery," is of comparatively recent introduction into our language. The terms employed by our ancestors, when they wished to designate this species of abstract allegorical performance, as distinguished from plays founded upon Scripture history, were "Moral" and "Moral-play," and they have reference to the nature of the production itself, in which some ethical precept is usually enforced and illustrated.'

After the invention of printing I could not conceive it likely that either miracle plays, or moral plays should hold their ground long, and Mr. Collier is, no doubt, correct in stating (and, I think, after Warton) 'that deviations from the first design of Miracle plays, by the employment of allegory, led to the performance of Moral plays; and deviations from Moral plays, by the relinquishment of abstraction for individual character, paved the way, by a natural and easy gradation, for tragedy and comedy, the representations of real life and manners.' What one wonders at is this, which I do not see observed either by Warton or by Collier, that with the ancient Greek and Latin drama before them, this should have been so long in bringing about; but the wonder ceases when the ignorance of the people is taken into account. For, as they both have observed, all learning was with the 'Clergy'—not necessarily with the Priesthood, as would commonly only be inferred, but with the 'Clerici' or 'Clerks,' whether belonging to the tonsure or the coif. Every-day men—'barrel men'—educated men were the 'Clergy,' and not necessarily in holy orders. It was because so many of the Clergy were likewise 'Chancellors' and men of high estate that the names became confused.

Sufficient to say that the 'Moralities' had their day and came to an end, and Greene in his 'Groat's-worth of Wit' informs us that in 1592 they might be considered as on the decline, saying that his 'Almanak is out of date—

> The people make no estimation
> Of *Morals*, teaching education.'

That day has passed by, and great dramatic names were on the ascendant, but it must not be forgotten that Shakespeare and others, his contemporaries, were indebted much to the ancient Pageants—which, of course, was not likely to have escaped the eloquent author of the 'History of English Poetry.' 'I have before observed,' he says, 'that the frequent and further exhibition of personifications in the Pageants, which anciently accompanied every high festivity, greatly contributed to cherish the spirit of allegorical poetry, and even to enrich the imagination of Spenser. The "MORALITIES" which now began to acquire new celebrity, and in which the same groups of the impersonated vices and virtues appeared, must have concurred in producing this effect. And hence, at the same time, we are led to account for the rational relish for allegorical poetry which so long prevailed among our ancestors. By means of these spectacles, ideal beings became common and popular objects; and emblematic imagery, which at present is only contemplated by a few retired readers in the obsolete pages of our older poets, grew familiar to the general eye.'

Mr. Hawkins in his 'Origin of the English Drama' has printed three 'Moralities,' to which as easily accessible the reader is referred. These are, 'Every Man,' published early in the reign of Henry VIII.; 'Hycke Scorne' and 'Lusty Juventus.' In the first: 'A man at the point of death, deserted by those on whom he chiefly trusted for assistance, is supported only by consciousness of his good actions.' In the second: 'A travelled man, who affects to laugh at virtue and religion, and thinks the knowledge of mankind to consist in vice and profligacy, is exposed and confuted by Pity, Contemplation, and Perseverance'; and in the third, called 'The Interlude of Lusty Juventus,' and written in the reign of Edward VI., are displayed the follies and weaknesses of a young man of pleasure, who is reformed by prudent counsellors, and led at last to virtue.' One thing is quite evident from this latter play, which is, that the rising generation were now 'Gospellers,' that is, friends to the Reformation; and that the old were tenacious of doctrines imbibed in their youth, for thus the devil is introduced lamenting the downfall of superstition:

The olde people would beleve still in my lawes,
But the younger doth leade them a contrary way;
They wyll not believe, they playnly say,
In old traditions, and made by man,
But they will lyve as the scriptures teecheth them.

And in another place Hypocrisy urges:

The worlde was never mery,
Since children were so bolde;
Now every boy wold be a teacher,
The father a fool, and the child a preacher.

Of the 'Moralities' of Skelton—'The Nigramansir' and 'Magnyfycence'—an account may be seen in Warton. Of the former he was shown a copy by poor Collier at Chichester, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, in a thin quarto, in the year 1504. The latter has been reprinted from Rastell's copy (no date) in Mr. Dyce's very valuable edition of Skelton's collected works. It is quite worth reading, and as an instance the reader may turn and see what 'Counterfet Countenaunce' says:

For Counterfet Countenaunce knowen am I.
This world is full of my foly.
I set not by him a fly
That can not counterfet a lye,
Sware, and stare, and byde thereby,
And countenaunce it clearly,
And defende it manerly.

Mr. Collier tells us that 'The Castle of Perseverance' 'is one of the oldest 'Morals' in our language, and he gives an analysis of it. It is curious that the performance was to be over by 'undern' of the day, that is to say, at nine in the morning, so that perhaps, like the *Ludus Coventriæ* it commenced at six o'clock.' Certainly, though our forefathers were early risers, and dined at ten and eleven, this is remarkable. And, methinks, if our ancestors could look so well to time and hours, even as regarded the 'Moralities,' we might have retained the 'undern-song' or, as I may venture to call it in more modern language, 'THE MORNING PRAYER.' The authority above referred to says that 'the performance of Moral Plays was not entirely discontinued until the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and one of the last dramatic repre-

sentations she beheld was a performance of this description—'The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality,' played before the Queen in the 43d year of her reign.

Collier gives numerous extracts from the 'Moralities,' which the reader with time and opportunity will do well to turn to. I will give one here, because it reminds me of what Hooker says so well of Nature, as God's instrument, in the first book of his 'Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity'; for, whatever thoughtless and sceptical men may say, 'those things which Nature is said to do are by Divine art performed, using Nature as an instrument; nor is there any such art or knowledge divine in Nature herself working, but in the Guide of Nature's work.

The 'Morality' above referred to is called 'Nature,' and was written by Henry Medwall, chaplain to Archbishop Morton. The lines referred to are those in which Nature represents herself as God's servitor, instrument and minister on earth to instruct the varied creatures of His hand.

> Who taught the cok his watche houres to observe,
> And syng of corage with shryll throte on hye?
> Who taught the pellycan her tender hart to carve,
> For she nolde suffer her byrdys to dye?
> Who taught the nyghtyngale to recorde besyng
> Her strange entunys in sylence of the nyght?
> Certes, I, Nature, and none other wyght.

Before closing these desultory remarks on the 'Mistery Plays,' or 'Miracle Plays,' and the 'Moralities,' one personage in them must not be omitted, however profane his conduct—that is to say, the DEVIL, the VICE, and the OLD INIQUITY, imported no doubt into the 'Moral Plays' from the 'Miracles.' The readers of Shakespeare will call to mind more than one passage in which these characters are really the predecessors of all buffoons, clowns, and fools, though not necessarily of domestic ones. For instance, the Prince in 'Henry IV.' calls Falstaff 'that reverend *Vice*, that grey *Iniquity*, that father ruffian, that *Vanity* in years'; and in the same scene his dagger of lath and lead is twice referred to, implements which, as is well known, were to the Vice as his sceptre to sway the Devil.

Again in a well-known passage of 'Richard III.' Glo'ster is made to say,

> Thus like the *formal Vice*, *Iniquity*,
> I moralise two meanings in one word.

On which words the 'Variorum' note is: 'The *Vice* of the old Moralities was a buffoon character, whose chief employment was to make the audience laugh, and one of the modes by which he effected his purpose was by double meanings or playing upon words. In these moral representations, Fraud, Iniquity, Covetousness, Luxury, Gluttony, Vanity, &c., were frequently introduced. The *formal* Vice, perhaps, means the *shrewd*, the sensible Vice; or rather, according to Nares' explanation, 'the regular Vice, according to the form of the old drama.'

The other passage from Shakespeare to be referred to is one in which both the Vice and the Devil ('*goodman* Devil,' with a sort of Roman *præfiscine* or, as it were with an eye to the Εὐμενίδες, or our own and the Scotch 'Gude Folk') are introduced. It is, in its way, quite a *locus classicus*, and if we bear in mind that it is the clown who sings it on parting with Malvolio, its piquancy and wit is only so much the more increased.

> I am gone, sir,
> And anon, sir,
> I'll be with you again,
> In a trice,
> Like to the old *vice*,
> Your need to sustain:
>
> Who with dagger of lath,
> In his rage and his wrath,
> Cries, ah, ha! to the devil:
> Like a mad lad,
> Pare thy nails, dad.
> Adieu, *goodman devil.*

Many more references might be culled from Shakespeare by any careful reader of his plays. Mr. Douce, in his 'Dissertation on the Clowns and Fools of our Darling Poet of Nature,' says that the terms were 'no doubt used by our old writers indiscriminately,' but that 'the theatrical clown was certainly a

character of much greater variety,' and as he presently adds, 'the theatrical clown or fool seems to have been a kind of heterogeneous character, drawn in part from real life, but very considerably heightened in order to produce stage effect ; an opinion that derives considerable support from what Shakespeare has put into the mouth of Hamlet, when he makes him admonish those who play the clown to speak no more than is set down for them.'

On which I would observe, that it was because the clown was so frequently overdone that our townsman and schoolfellow, Sir Philip Sidney, in his 'Defence of Poesy,' said that 'such gross absurdities spoiled plays, so that they were neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion ; so as neither the admiration and commiseration nor the right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. I know Apuleius did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one movement, and I know the ancients have one or two examples of tragi-comedies, as Plautus hath Amphytrio. But if we mark them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals. So falleth it out, indeed, that having no right comedy in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but scurrility, unworthy of any chaste ears, or some extreme show of doltishness, indeed, fit to lift up a loud laughter and nothing else ; where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight, as the tragedy should be still maintained in a well raised admiration.' So refined was the taste of Sir Philip Sidney!

Douce would clearly distinguish the clown from the fool ; and, indeed, attempts to classify the different sorts of fools—with what success the reader must determine. His account of the 'Vice' comes under No. VI. A passage referred to in an after page from Middleton's 'Mayor of Queenborough,' will illustrate what has been said above. What Douce has cramped into verse, Dyce in his very valuable edition, has given in prose and verse. The words are put into Simon's own mouth, the tanner of Queenborough.

'O! the clowns that I have seen in my time! The very peeping out of one of them would have made a young heir laugh though his father lay a dying; a man undone in the town the day before (the saddest case that can be) might for his twopence have burst himself with laughing, and ended all his miseries. Here was a merry world, my masters!

> Some talk of things of state, of puling stuff;
> There's nothing in a play to a clown,
> If he have the grace to hit on't, that's the thing;
> The king shews well, but he sits off the king.'

Without referring to other of our early dramatists, if the reader will turn to Ben Jonson's 'The Devil is an Ass,' he will find two pertinent allusions to the Devil and the Vice. In the first act Pug, the less devil, says to Satan, the great devil,

> O chief,
> You do not know, dear chief, what there is in me!
> Prove me but for a fortnight, for a week,
> And lend me but a *Vice* to carry with me
> To practise there with any playfellow,
> And you will see, there will come more upon't
> Than you'll imagine, precious chief.
> *Sat.* What *Vice*?
> What kind would'st thou have it of?
> *Pug.* Why, any Fraud
> Or Covetousness, or Lady Vanity,
> Or old Iniquity.

Whereupon Satan summons him, and he comes in a trice and informs the audience how he is ready to teach everything that is bad. In the fifth act, as Strutt has remarked, there is quite an unexpected state of affairs, for whereas 'in the Moralities the Devil usually carried away the Iniquity or Evil at the conclusion of the drama,' rare Ben, by way of burlesque, reverses the state of things, and makes the Iniquity run away with the fiend, saying—

> Mount, darling of darkness, my shoulders are broad;
> He that carries the fiend is sure of his load.
> The Devil was wont to carry away the Evil,
> But now the Evil outcarries the Devil.

The great profaneness of all this has been hinted at be-

fore, nor was it allowed to pass without censure in early days, and as it is proper to see both sides of the picture, the reader is referred to Philip Stubbes's 'Anatomie of Abuses,' originally printed in 1585. The two extracts following from the division of the work headed 'Stage Playes and Interludes with their Wickedness,' will speak his mind upon the subject, as well as that of those who thought with him:

'All stage playes, enterludes, and commedies, are eyther of divine or prophane matter: If they bee of divine matter, then are they moste intollerable, or rather sacrilegious, for that the blessed Worde of God is to be handled reverently, gravely, and sagely, with veneration to the glorious Majestie of God, which shineth therein, and not scoffingly, floutingly, and jybingly, as it is uppon stages and enterludes, without any reverence, worshippe, or veneration at all done to the same. For it is most certaine the Worde of our Salvation, the price of Christe His bloode, and the merits of His passion were not given to be derided and jested, or to be mixed and interlaced with bawdrie, wanton shewes, and uncomely gestures, as is used (every man knoweth) in those plays and enterludes upon stages and scaffoldes made for that purpose.'

After which he presently adds:

'Upon the other side, if their playes be of prophane matters, then tend they to the dishonour of God and nourishing of vice, both which are damnable, and that whether they be the one or the other they are quite contrarie to the Word of grace, and sucked out of the devil's teates, to nourish us in idolatrie, heathenrie, and sinne. And therefore, they, carrying the note and brand of God His curse upon their backes, which waie soever they goe, are to be hissed out of all Christian kingdoms, if they will have Christe to dwelle amongste them.'

Evidently, according to the views of this tetrical Anatomist of Abuses and very rigid Puritan, the stage was only an evil, and when Spudæus had said that many a good example might be fetched from the stage, Philoponus replied:

'And when, as you say, there are good examples to be learned in them, truely so there are, if you will learne

falsehood; if you will learn cozenings; if you will learn to deceive; if you will learne to play the hipocrite: to coy, to lie, and to falsifie; if you will learn to jest, laugh, and fleece, to grinne, to nodd, and move; if you will learne to plaie the *Vice*, to sweare, tease, and blaspheme both heaven and earth.' After which it is presently asked, 'Who will call him a wise man that plaieth the parte of a *Foole* and a *Vice*! Who can call hym a Christian who plaieth the parte of a *Devil*, the sworne enemie of Christ! Who can call him a great man that plaieth the part of a dissembling hipocrite! And to bee brave who can call hym a straight dealyng man who plaieth a cozener's trick! And so of all the rest. Awaie with this so infamous an art, for goe they niver so brave, yet are they counted and taken but for beggars. And is it not true?'

With the utter strictness and straitness of many parts of honest Philip Stubbes it is not necessary to fall in, but in his hatred of profaneness all will acquiesce. It is quite worth while to refer to the 'Anatomie of Abuses' in Stubbes, who, in all probability, would not have passed over these lines in the 'Eve of St. Clement's' without his censure, put into the mouth of Griznez, fool to the Duke of Orleans:—

> Knowest thou not, Sir Fool, my brother,
> One dirty hand can wash another?
> Ofttimes offences that are twins
> Shall suffer less than single sins;
> Stern forfeits tread upon his kibe
> Who hath not robbed enough to bribe;
> To distance justice in the course,
> Who steals a purse should steal a horse;
> Not hardly the offender stares,
> When Accusation hath gone shares;
> Receive thou, then, dear brother Fool,
> Monition wise from Folly's school,
> To kiss a Nun, nor fear the worst,
> Thou should'st have kissed the Abbess first.

I am inclined to think, after all, that Dr. Hook's judgment is a fair one:

'On the whole it may fairly be said, that these *miracles*, *mysteries*, and *moralities*, were wholesome for the times; and that though they afterwards degenerated into actual

abuses, yet they are not to be condemned without reserve and without mercy. Their history and character are interesting, not only as giving a fair picture of the character of remote ages, but also because they seem to be the original from which arose stage plays and oratorios.'

In truth, as before observed, it was near the time about which we have now been writing that Shakespeare arose and eclipsed all his predecessors, for as Hallam said, 'The name of Shakespeare is the greatest in our literature, it is the greatest in all literature'—a wise judgment, very different to that of Hume in his Appendix to the life of James I.

As connected with this time, though somewhat later, I may mention here that Charles Lomax was a great friend of William Temple's, of Shrewsbury, and when on a visit there at the end of the year, 1613, gave an account of the burning of the Globe Theatre, while Shakespeare's 'Henry VIII.' was being played there. This, it appears, was on June 29 that same year.

It was later still that John Badger, a great lover of the drama, and connected with Shrewsbury, recounted to Edward Priswick how he had recently paid a visit, when in London, to St. Saviour's, or St. Mary Overy's, Church to see the graves of the men whom he held in honour—to wit of John Gower, of Edward Shakespeare, the youngest brother of the poet, and his friend Henslowe, of Fletcher, the marrow of Beaumont, and last, though not least, in search of the resting-place of Massinger, whose interment there is simply noted in the register, as that of 'a stranger.'

The following notice from Gifford will show that John Badger was well informed:

'Massinger died on the 17th of March, 1640. He went to bed in good health, says Langbaine, and was found dead in the morning in his own home on the bankside. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Saviour's, and the comedians paid the last sad duty to his name, by attending him to the grave. It does not appear, from the strictest search, that a stone, or inscription of any kind, marked the place where his dust was deposited; even the memorial of his mortality is given with apathetick brevity which accords but too well

with the obscure and humble passages of his life. "March 20, 1639–40, buried Philip Massinger, A STRANGER"! No flowers were flung into his grave, no elegies "soothed his hovering spirit," and of all the admirers of his talents and his work, none but Sir Aston Cokayne dedicated a line to his memory.'

As connected with the valley of the Rea, it will not be out of place to mention that this lover of the drama, John Badger, was a friend of James Offlay of the Lea, and Richard Nichols of Newnham; and on his visits in the valley, which, for its beauty, he would call 'The Land of Old Romance,' and as he sojourned in the old memorial houses at the Linches, Yockleton, Nox, or Cruckton—he loved to talk of the spirits who ruled the stage, and had many listeners, for he was himself a mimic, and could command attention. He was a man full of London news, and would tell how he visited his friends at the 'Bere' in Southwark, and at 'The Tabard,' and at 'Nonsuch House' on old London Bridge, reporting that it was built of wood ready cut and carved in Holland, how no iron was used in the fastenings, and how it was held together by wooden pegs only, like the roofs of many of our old churches, which would have fallen in long ago, but for the Heart of Oak which held them together.

'NOTHING LIKE OAK!' said my Talking Friend, 'NOTHING LIKE OAK!' And I bethought me of the words in the 'Purple Island,' and closed the chapter:—

> How like's the world unto a tragic stage!
> Where every changing scene the actors change;
> Some, subject, crouch and fawn; some reign and rage;
> And new strange plots bring scenes as new and strange,
> Till most are slain—the rest their parts have done;
> So here, some laugh and play, some weep and groan,
> Till all put off their robes; and stage and actors gone.
>
> PHINEAS FLETCHER. Southey's *British Poets*, p. 751.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE FIRST STUART.

Scilicet interdum miscentur tristia lætis,
Ne populum toto pectore festa juvent.
OVID, *Fast.* vi. 463.

Man, there's naething in thy house,
But ae auld sworde without a sheath,
That hardly now would fell a mouse.
Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead.
SCOTT, *Minst.* ii. 5.

But, soon after, all English souls were employed equally to divide themselves betwixt exclamations of sorrow for Elizabeth's death, and acclamations of joy for King James his succeeding her.—FULLER'S *Church Hist.* Book X. vol. v. 258.

The antique regal Chair of Inthronation did blessedly receive, with the person of his Majesty, the full accomplishment also of that prophetical prediction of this his coming to the Crown, which antiquity hath recorded to have been thereon inscribed thus :

Ni fallat Fatum, Scoti hunc quocunque locatum
Invenient Lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem.
SPEED'S *Great Britain, K. James*, p. 1222.

'THE Crown of England,' says Hume, 'was never transmitted from father to son with greater tranquillity than it passed from the family of Tudor to that of Stuart. During the whole reign of Elizabeth the eyes of men had been employed in search of her successor; and when old age made the prospect of her death more immediate, there appeared none but the King of the Scots who could advance any just claim or pretension to the throne. He was great-grandson of Margaret, eldest daughter of Henry VII., and on the failure

of the male line, his hereditary right remained unquestionable.'

On asking my Talking Friend what was the feeling of the neighbourhood on the accession of James, he told me that although the loss of Elizabeth was considered as great as might be, and though she was very greatly lamented throughout the whole country, which had always been loyal to the throne, yet the course of things ran pretty much as usual, and on its being reported that the new king was to be proclaimed on Sunday, March 27, the whole valley of the Rea flocked to the Old Town in crowds to see what was to be seen and to hear what was to be heard. In the words of the old Chronicler—so often quoted by the historians of Shrewsbury, and whose 'Chronicle' closes shortly after this time, to their evident loss:

'On the 27th of March, being Sunday, King James was proclaimed here in the afternoon by the bailiffs and aldermen in their scarlet gowns, with the worshipful magistrates and the rest of the commons, with sownde of troompets and droomes, and joyfully in castinge up their handes, and shakinge of hatts and capps, in sainge "God save King James! Amen." And the day followinge the sheriffe, whose name was Justice Kinaston, with the justices and gentyll of the shire came to Shrewsbury with their great horses, and proclaymed there with sownde of troompet in like solemne manner.' The last incident mentioned in the old 'Chronicle' is the arrival, on July 24, of the Council of the Marches: 'The seale came four days before; and they continued the term and vacant tyme till the 7th of October, and so departed to Ludlow with seale and all.'

It may be added here that James arrived in London on May 7, and was crowned with his Queen, Anne of Denmark, at Westminster, July 25. Of the conspiracy to place Arabella Stuart on the throne nothing was known on the Rea-side. Such points hardly concerned the Happy Valley—as it might then have been called without question; for there was no bilge-water from the lead mines to mar the clearness of the water, or to poison the fish: and no coal smoke from the engine to tarnish the glory of

the firmament, by night or by day. It was, in truth, a lovely spot.

> Glides the brooklet through the rushes,
> Now with dipping boughs at play,
> Now with quicker music gushes,
> Where the pebbles chafe the way.

It chanced, just at this time, that some very old friends from Cherbury came to pay a visit at the old homestead, and my Talking Friend took the opportunity of saying that 'There was a time when visits from Cherbury were not so acceptable in the Vale—for of all the rough wayfarers on their way to the old town they were the roughest'; and then he told how old Boniface Blazes blew a horn all the way from Pontesbury, passing under the Old Oak on his way to Cruckton, after his wife's burial, and how he said in a mellow voice, like Pilate's, 'that now he hoped he should have a little rest and peace, for it was many years since he had had any.' 'Never,' said my Talking Friend, 'was there such a rough set as the roaring boys of Cherbury; and, the more's the pity, this was their favourite road!

If the reader will turn to Arthur Wilson's Life of James I. he will find that the Cherbury boys were not the only *roughs* of the time. London had its full share. 'The sword and buckler trade being now out of date, one corruption producing another (the city of London being always a fit receptacle for such, whose prodigalities and wastes made them instruments for debaucheries), divers sects of vicious persons, going under the title "Roaring Boys, Bravadoes, Roysters," &c., commit many insolencies. But there comes a Proclamation, like a strong Pill, and carries away the grossest of these humours.'

As regards the Cherbury boys something of that old mischievous fun (for there was more mischief than vice in their rough ways) seems to have continued quite two centuries later. The late Captain Witts, a veteran of the Nile (and he was one of the most benevolent of men), used to tell how at the end of the last century, as he was on his way from Cardington to Lydleys Hayes, to Church Stretton and Longnor by Lebotwood, he met with a curious old Cherbury boy, who told him all sorts of stories, and repeated to him, by the way, a

funny epitaph which, as he had heard told, was written on a puritanical locksmith, and ran thus :—

> A zealous Locksmith died of late,
> And did arrive at heaven's gate ;
> He stood without, and would not knock,
> Because he meant to pick the lock.

The same worthy told the captain, whom he familiarly called 'Maister John,' that on the Saturday night before, on his way home to Cherbury he found Giles Caradoc very drunk, with his feet in the brook, the water just rippling over them, who said, when appealed to, refusing at the same time to change his position : 'That he had to sing *bass* in the church to-morrow !'

Such stories, well authenticated, tell of days gone by—of very rough days sometimes—but, in after ages, a rustic coarseness, which is not without cleverness, becomes tempered by education, and Cherbury boys are moulded into Shrewsbury scholars, and both Universities can tell their worth ; so that some Boniface Blazes, in after times, might rise up and say,

> We should have answered heaven
> Boldly, '*Not guilty !*' the imposition cleared
> Hereditary ones.

Still harping on Cherbury, my Talking Friend told me that old Charley Cross of that parish, who said his family had belonged to the Black Canons, out of a 'ROARING BOY' turned out to be a very intelligent man, and indeed, something of a traveller in his own country ; adding that he was connected with the Crosses of the Rea valley—a name quite common there till within these last five-and-twenty years, since which time the great gulf-stream of trade and speculation had carried them westward to Demerara, and eastward to Moulmein, the Straits of Malacca, Borneo, and Japan. The old man to whom my Talking Friend alluded had once been on the Scilly Islands, and recounted under his shade wonderful things of the Wolf-rock, and how it moaned and howled before the coming storm. He was, in his way, a remarkable man, and brought back with him some of the water (or

Druid's) pimpernel, the *Samolus Valerandi*, I believe, to ward off diseases from his cattle, but it would not grow at Cherbury. In his own neighbourhood he had attempted to turn the catkins of the poplar to some account, and when at Meole he collected the cotton grass which grew in the low grounds of the Newnham fields, with the same intent, but my Talking Friend thought he never suceeded in getting cotton from them. Still, he always spoke of him as a shrewd, enterprising, and intelligent man. No doubt, had he lived in later days, he would have been a great cotton lord, and, he added, 'He would have done more for the neighbourhood than even the Marshalls have done!' Evidently old Cross of Cherbury was a great favourite.

And methinks, when I call to mind those rollicking, roystering times, when education was small, and the beer-tap ran like the stream hard by, and not to be a good trencher-man was to be a simpleton, and all jokes were practical, rough and ready, I think we must not judge the men of the time too harshly. They would never have run away with thousands, or have traded recklessly with other people's fortunes, as many in these days of high pressure and advanced education appear to do. Very coarse and very vulgar people there always will be and in all circumstances. No civilisation will teach them, and no education will soften them, because mere education is not grace; and of each one of this class it may be said, in the words of the old drama, 'The simple man, like the beggar going to the Stocks, laughed, as not being sensible of his own disgrace.' The men of old Cross's caste had nothing in them of this sort, nor of the Mohocks of the *Spectator*, of whom Steele gives an account at a later date. Such rather was Hacon Foulmouth in the 'Saga of the Burnt Njal'—'Ideoque Hakus (Insolens) vocabatur quod nulla re, neque dictis, neque factis, cum quocunque res erat, acquiesceret'—or, in Dr. Dasent's English version, 'He was called Thortel Foulmouth, because he spared no one with whom he had to deal, either in word or deed.' A splendid specimen of a Mohock!

And at the time of which I am now writing, the commencement of James I.'s reign, the country round was improv-

ing, and my Talking Friend said that bevies of Cherbury boys might come down now and then, but their 'roaring' was not like that of the old 'Roaring Boys' of half a century agone. The whole valley, in fact, was much more civilised, and what added to the improving state of things was this, that most of the gentry resided on their estates, which, besides improving their properties, added greatly to their influences. This, it may be added, was entirely in accordance with the views of the king, as we collect from the 'Apophthegmes' of Lord Bacon, who tells us that 'King James was wont to be very earnest with the country gentlemen to go from London to their country homes, and sometimes he would say to them: "Gentlemen, at London you are like ships in a sea, which show like nothing, but in your country villages you are like ships in a river, which look like great things."' This was not very complimentary, but it was probably spoken in the king's broad, rough Scotch, and acquiesced in because there was sound truth at the bottom of it. My Talking Friend always maintained that 'for their betters to reside amongst their people was for the bettering of the both'; and the old rector of Hanwood would turn to his musty Seneca and say:—

> Ubi non est pudor
> Nec cura juris, sanctitas, pietas, fides,
> Instabile regnum est.

There can be no doubt at all but that things were improving, and the country people were willing to admit it, as they passed and repassed, and sat down and conversed beneath the hospitable shade of my Talking Friend. Yet would he add that there was great room for improvement, and that many of the people were rough and hard, as the rough mossy bark on his gnarled and time-stained trunk; albeit he could not bear to hear the country people run down, and might have said with well-languaged Daniel in the 'Musophilus':—

> But let them rest; it ever hath been known,
> They others' virtues scorn who doubt their own.

We shall yet, however, meet with discouraging days and

times, especially those of the second Charles, wherein town and country seemed to be going backward, still verifying the solemn words of our great religious poet :—

> Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
> From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
> But justice, and some fatal curse annex'd,
> Deprives them of their outward liberty,
> Their inward lost.

On my inquiring of my Talking Friend if King James had ever visited Shrewsbury, he replied dryly—and his leaves shook as with a sardonic smile—'Never that I heard of. In truth he never seemed to like journeying northwards after he had felt the comparative liberty of the south. Indeed, old Mr. Lightfoot, the preacher, said one day as he sat with Bible in hand beneath these boughs, "I am not clear as to the king's views, but upon one point I am quite clear, he likes England better than Scotland, and moderate rather than extreme views, and my opinion is he will show that he does so on all occasions. Opposed as he is to the doctrines of Calvin and to the corruptions of Romanism, and entertaining, as I think he does, the sober doctrines of Arminius, without the extremes on that side, I wish I could conclude that his religious views were deep." From which I inferred that the good man thought the king somewhat of a controversialist, and I have often heard the rector of Pontesbury say the same.'

Looking to the reign of James I. generally, it may be stated that it influenced the country little, and the valley of the Rea less.

Something was heard of the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, but little known. As far as my Talking Friend reported the matter, all he said was that it was discussed by the rectors of Pontesbury and Hanwood, who held different opinions about it ; the latter always siding with the king's party, and expressing his unbounded delight at the prospect of a new version of the Scriptures agreed upon at this Conference. The good man likewise thought (his own stipend at Hanwood being very small) that the sooner the maintenance of

the parochial clergy was looked to and Church discipline redressed, the better.

The heads following, added to Montague's narrative, were all of them very generally acquiesced in by all, certainly, who thought with the rector of Hanwood :—

'As manie learned ministers, and maintenance for them, to be provided in such places of England where there is want as maye be.

'As few double-beneficed men and pluralities as maye be; and those that have double benefices to maintain preachers, and to have their livinge as near as maye be one to the other.

'One uniform translation of the Bible to be made, and onelye to be used in all the churches of England.'

Of Archbishop Whitgift, who died at this time, very little was likewise known here, good man as he was, 'and born,' says old Stow, 'for the benefit of his country, and the good of the Church.' The fact is there was now no Abbot's Parlour in Shrewsbury, where such sort of news could be picked up, and some simple-hearted brother tell how Queen Elizabeth was wont to call him 'her little black husband; which favour,' says old Fuller, 'nothing elated his gravity, carrying himself as one unconcerned in all worldly honour.' To which he adds : 'He survived the Queen not a full year, getting his bane by going on a cold morning by barge to Fulham, there to consult with the bishops about managing their matters in the ensuing Parliament; and no wonder if those few sparks of natural heat were quickly quenched with a small cold in him who was then above seventy-two years of age. He died of the palsy, one of the worthiest men that ever the English hierarchy did enjoy.' No mean praise, surely!

Richard Bancroft, by whom he was succeeded, and who took a leading part in the Hampton Court Conference—the same who proposed the celebrated canons of 1604—was better known in the district by name, because he was a Lancashire man, and there were many cloth dealings with the Lancashire and Cheshire men and the men of Shrewsbury, who were used to tell how the trade of Chester pulled up the doors in the

Rows and shut themselves in when the Welsh made any sudden inroad, with the intent to rob them of their broadcloths, as they were afterwards more commonly called in the West of England. Arthur Wilson, in his 'Life of James I.,' calls Bancroft 'a sturdy piece,' adding that what 'Whitgift strove to do with sweetness and gentleness Bancroft did powder in with rigour and severity.' Though traduced by his enemies he was a good man, neither cruel nor covetous, and maintained his position wisely as well as profitably to others. His successor, Archbishop Abbot, though a good was a very different man, and not a man to be much liked in a county where Romanists and Puritans were almost placed in even balances, and generally protested against.

The truth is that in Shropshire all Separatists were, more or less, looked upon as the Pope's Journeymen. And sure enough, when

> sects are formed, and split
> With morbid restlessness, the ecstatic fit
> Spreads wide;

and the Romanist exults. It is, and always has been, his time of harvest and ingathering. The reader, as we are writing of the times of James, may not improbably call to mind that clever chapter in 'The Fortunes of Nigel,' in which the king is made to say: 'And so this Olifaunt is a Puritan? Not the less like to be a Papist, for all that, for extremities meet, as the scholiast proveth. There are, as I have proved in my book, Puritans of papistical principles. It is just a new tout on an auld horn.' So said the author of the 'Basilicon Doron,' who had just before said to Steenie, in his broadest Scotch, with which the late Dr. Arnold was so taken: 'Do I not ken the smell of pouther, think ye? Who scoured out the fifth of November, save our royal selves? Cecil, and Suffolk, and all of them were at fault, like sae mony mongrel tikes, when I puzzled it out; and trow ye that I cannot smell pouther?'

Which brings to my mind what next disturbed, not only the valley of the Rea from Caux Castle to Coleham, but the whole country from one end to the other. I mean the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the intended

horrible catastrophe
Of an assembled Senate unredeemed,
From subterranean Treason's darkling power
Merciless act of sorrow infinite!
Worse than the product of that dismal night,
When gushing, copious as a thunder-shower,
The blood of Huguenots through Paris streamed.

Historically considered, there are difficulties which still hang about this plot, but, taking one thing with another—unless some extraordinary circumstances are hereafter discovered—there is no denying its existence. And so it is a fearful reality, let the Papist lay it on the Puritan, or the Puritan on the Papist, as they may. Certainly, says Arthur Wilson, in his history of James, it was 'fathered upon the Puritans (as Nero did the burning of Rome upon the Christians) by some impudent and cunning Jesuits, whose practice is to deceive, if not quite to clear their party, yet by stirring this muddy water to make that which is in it to appear the less perspicuous; and it is like the rest of their figments, fit baits for ignorance to nibble on; which, some years after I had the opportunity at Bruges, in Flanders, to make one Weston, an old Jesuit active in the Powder plot, ingenuously to confess.' Many, even yet, think the Puritans are not clear, but there can be no doubt but that in the first instance it was confined to a few misguided and fanatical Romanists. And, atrocious as was the scheme, it is not unprecedented in its nature. 'Swedish history'—the author of the 'Annals of England' tells us in a note—'furnishes two instances of gunpowder-plots, real or pretended. Christian II. made such a plot the pretext for his barbarous executions at Stockholm in 1520; and in 1533 the regency of Lubeck engaged some Germans to blow up Gustavus Vasa while holding the diet, but the plan was discovered on the very eve of its execution.

Whatever views may be taken of this plot this much is certain, as I before observed, that it caused the greatest possible sensation throughout the whole of the country, and particularly in Shrewsbury; the more so as the adjoining counties of Worcestershire and Warwickshire were mixed up in it. What added to the interest excited in the valley of the Rea was this: Stephen Evans, of Hanwood, had relations

at Dunchurch, in Warwickshire, and one, Hugh Ferrington, of Shorthill, had lived at Holbeach House, in Worcestershire, with Stephen Lyttelton. The consequence was that wonderful stories were repeated at the Lea Cross, and at the Cock in Hanwood, and there was great excitement.

With reference to the translation of the Bible, my own impression is that our version is to the English language what Luther's is to the German. It has all the racy force and simplicity of the Greek and the Hebrew. The question of what is now called a 'New Translation' is one of very great delicacy; but alterations might be made, with care and judgment, and with the assistance of ripe scholars, such as were made upon all the early translations, without in any way, or in a very small way, disturbing the original text. All that is requisite is to correct the comparatively few errors of the translators, whether in the Hebrew portions or in the Greek. The advance in critical scholarship, geographical and antiquarian knowledge, seems to require this. The doctrinal alterations, as Bentley put it clearly and pithily enough in his 'Phileleutherus Lipsiensis' concerning the New Testament, would be next to none. 'It is competently exact indeed, even in the worst MS. now extant; nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them, choose as awkwardly as we can, choose the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings.'

However verbally correct, I cannot say that I think any corrected version (so far as I have yet seen) fit to be read in the ears of the congregation. At the same time, as I have said above, I wish all supposed mistakes corrected; though I do not think that some supposed mistakes are mistakes. For instance, I do not think that in Acts vii. 45, and Heb. iv. 8, 'JESUS' is a mistake. I think our translators wished readers of their Bible to bear in mind always that the Leader of the Israelitish Host in the Old Testament is the type of the Great Captain of our Salvation (Heb. ii. 10), of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has not only saved us by His precious bloodshedding, but is leading us onwards still, day by day, to that better land—to the heavenly Canaan, whither so many we loved so well have gone before—not dead, but fallen on sleep.

I am probably in a minority in this view; but, after long years of study and consideration, I see no cause to change it. I wonder what the worthy old rector of Hanwood thought when he examined the New Version, and found the name of 'JESUS' left in these two passages.

The next circumstance, in point of time, which I remember my Talking Friend to have mentioned, was the lamented death of Prince Henry—that great favourite of the English nation. This was in 1612. The news of it was brought to Shrewsbury from Bristol. It was this well-beloved prince that said of Sir Walter Raleigh, 'No king but my father would keep such a bird in a cage'; and the tribute of sympathy was well repaid when Raleigh said: 'Whereas this book, by the title it hath, calls itself "The First Part of the General History of the World," implying a second and a third volume which I also intended, and have hewn out; besides many other discouragements persuading my silence, it hath pleased God to take that glorious prince out of the world to whom they were directed, whose unspeakable and never enough lamented loss hath taught me to say with Job, "Versa est in luctum cithara mea, et organum meum in vocem flentium."'

It is well-known how careless his father was in his conversation, and how reckless in his use of oaths, so that Fuller's words have much point in them:—'Thus we take leave of the memory of so worthy a prince, never heard by any alive to swear an oath, for which Archbishop Abbot commended him in his funeral sermon; the prince being wont to say "that he knew no game or value to be won or lost that could be worth an oath."'[1] On calling to mind such a character the tones of our great religious poet flash across the mind like light:—

> Such delight hath God in men
> Obedient to His will, that He vouchsafes
> Among them to set up His tabernacle;
> The Holy One with mortal men to dwell.[2]

Somewhere about this time my Talking Friend heard the rector of Hanwood tell how old Sir Roger Owen spoke jestingly of a Parliament which he called 'an addled Parlia-

[1] Vol. v. 431.

[2] *Paradise Lost*, xii. 245.

ment.' He did not serve in it, so far as I could make out, but it was attended by Francis Berkeley and Lewis Prowde, Esquires. It began on May 5, and was dissolved on June 7, and got the name of 'addled' because it did not pass a single act. As we have seen more than once, our forefathers were fond of giving quaint names to Parliaments.

It may be recollected that in the early pages of this history, the time-honoured old oak, the father of my Talking Friend, constantly referred to the Cometa, or the Blazing Star, as often as one hung out its fiery crescent in the heavens, like a beard of fire, as Æschylus called the beacon fire in the 'Agamemnon.' My Talking Friend, on the appearance of one in 1618, referred to his father's observations; and, indeed, he himself thought such appearances unusual. It appears to have been visible for more than a month.

There can be no doubt but that it gave rise to many fears on the Rea-side. Perhaps they would have been equally surprised, had they been in London, to see Buckingham carried on men's shoulders in a sedan chair, 'for the people would rail on him in the streets, loathing that men should be brought to as servile a condition as horses.' Carriages were now become common, superseding the more cumbrous 'wagon-coach,' like that in which the Lady Sidney came to Shrewsbury from Ludlow. No doubt in earlier days the word wagon had a wide acceptation, as in Ezekiel, where the prophet speaks of 'chariots and wagons and wheels,' &c., and so in the 'Faerie Queene'—

> Then to her yron *wagon* she betakes,
> And with her beares the fowle welfavoured witch.

But wherever the haughty pride of Buckingham might lead him, the arbitrary views of James in the exercise of the prerogative had hardly reached the country. What these principles were, and what they were leading to, was a matter beyond the cognizance of the Rea-side. Few could have comprehended the words which the king spoke in an answer to the Parliament in 1610, 'that as it was blasphemy to dispute what God may do, so it is sedition in subjects to dispute what a king may do in the plenitude of his power.'

About this time the rector of Hanwood had been on a visit in Shrewsbury to his old friend, Dr. Sampson Price, Incumbent of St. Chad's, who told him a good deal about one Antonius de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalatro, who had recently embraced the Protestant faith. As may be seen in our historians this Dr. Sampson Price was a man of no small note in his day, for he bore the name of 'Hæreticorum Malleus,' the Hammer or Maul of Heretics, so zealously did he withstand the Papists face to face. The old rector and this venerable divine were always on terms of great intimacy, and it was to him (a great stay at home, as was likely) that Sampson Price said—who had himself seen a good deal of foreign countries, and anticipating the fears of Goldsmith—that the travelled heart, when absent from home, always wishes to be there, and that his good friend would willingly exchange the Tiber or the Po for the Rea-brook, brawling over its shallows, and for its speckled trouts.

And I bethought me of the tender words of the Englishwoman in Egypt—Mrs. Poole, the sister of our great Arabic scholar, Mr. Lane—'However long or however short may be the time proposed by any person for the purpose of visiting other countries; however pleasurable their expectations; however full of hope their prospects, there are regrets—there is a pang—in quitting England, which must be felt by the wayfarer, but can never be described, and never fully anticipated.'[1] Words of great truth and feeling.

It was owing to his travels that Dr. Sampson Price had so much to say of the Archbishop of Spalatro, and like our own Archbishop Abbot he looked upon him as a man of mark. Bishop Andrewes was more candid in his opinion; for, on being asked at his first coming over 'whether he was a Protestant or no,' he replied 'Truly, I know not, but he is a *Detestant* of the opinions of Rome.'

They on the Rea-side had never heard of Marcus Antonius de Dominis, whom old Fuller (mistaken, probably, in his judgment) called an 'arrant *apostata*,' for though, as Shakespeare says, 'to say Ay and No' to all particulars about him 'is more than to answer in a catechism.' But, though

[1] Vol. i. 47.

he was not known on the Rea-side, he created a great commotion in England, for as Fuller says again, 'It is a humour of us English strangely to admire strangers, believing invisible perfections in them above those of our own land.' In a later page he adds: 'He had too much witt and learning to be a cordial Papist, but too little honesty and religion to be a sincere Protestant.'

To say the truth he was the cause of much discussion, and the rector of Hanwood never held him in the repute which old Sampson Price did. There can be no doubt that he was a mixed character. Some have said the same of Savonarola. Watson in his 'Life and Times of James' is very severe against him, yet the note in the 'Complete History,' &c., is worth transcribing:—'Our author had been more tender of the character of the Archbishop of Spalatro if he had known or remembered how much the world had been obliged to him for that noble "History of the Council of Trent," wrote by Father Paul, the Venetian. For it was by his means, and the measures he had concerted with that Father before he left Italy, that Archbishop Abbot got the manuscript transmitted in parts into England.'

My Talking Friend had little else to say of the reign of James I., with whom the old town and the country generally had small connection. Fuller says of it, 'All the reign of King James was better for one to live under than to write about, consisting of a chapter of constant tranquillity without any tumours of trouble to entertain posterity with.' Hence Taylor the Water Poet says, in his Funeral Elegie upon his death:

> His government both God and men did please,
> Except such spirits as might complain of ease.
> Repining Passions, wearied with much rest,
> The wont to be molested might molest;
> Such men think peace a torment, and no trouble
> Is worse than trouble, though it should come double.

Perhaps two of the greatest men of James's days were Sir Edward Coke and Sir Francis, better known as Lord, Bacon; the former, a man of vast legal intellect, respected to this day, but of a hard nature, sufficiently instanced in the

conviction of such men as the Earl of Essex and Sir Walter Raleigh ; the latter, a man of most extraordinary and versatile genius, scarcely if ever surpassed, but withal ostentatious and vain, to such a degree, indeed, as to become involved in debts which brought about his ruin. Hence Arthur Wilson speaks of him as 'the true emblem of human frailty,' though 'Nature's midwife,' presently adding that he was 'a fit jewel to have beautified and adorned a flourishing kingdom, if his flaws had not disgraced the lustre that should have set him off.'

In modern times we have had brilliant sketches of his life, to which, not omitting Lord Macaulay's, the reader is referred. But, possibly, after all, Fuller's 'Essay' on his character is as characteristic as any:—'None can character him to the life save himself; he was in part more than a man who, in any liberal profession, might be whatsoever he would himself. A great honourer of ancient authors, yet a great deviser and practiser of new ways of learning. Privy counsellor, as to King James so to Nature itself, diving into many of her abstruse mysteries ; new conclusions he would dig out with mattocks of gold and silver, not caring what his experience cost him, expending on the trials of nature, all and more than he got by the trials at the bar posterity being the better for this, though he be worse for his own dear experiments. He and his servants had all in common, the men never wanting what their master had, and thus what came flowing in unto him was sent flying away from him, who in giving of rewards knew no bounds but the bottom of his own purse. Wherefore when King James heard that he had given ten pounds to an underkeeper by whom he had sent him a buck, the king said merrily, "I and he shall both die beggars," which was condemnable prodigality in a servant. He lived many years after, and in his books will ever survive, in the reading whereof modest men commend him in what they do, condemn themselves in what they do not, understand, as believing the fault in their own eyes and not in the object.' How much more pleasant is it to read this than Pope's couplet in his 'Essay on Man'!—

> If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
> The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.

It was grand of rare old Ben Jonson to write thus in his 'Discoveries,' when the king and all his courtiers, and the fallen great man's enemies, could read it :—

'*Lord St. Albans.*—My conceit of this person was never increased towards him by his place or honours ; but I have to do reverence to him, for the greatness that was only proper to himself, in that he seemed to me ever, by his work, one of the greatest men, and most worthy of admiration, that had been for many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed that God would give him strength, for greatness he could not want. Neither could I condole in a word or syllable for him, as knowing no accident could do harm to virtue, but rather help to make it manifest.'

The natural inference is that Ben Jonson supposed those about him to be really the guilty ones, and not the Lord of St. Albans himself.

These, however, as I have many times hinted, were matters not much debated on the Rea-side, though they would have been had the Abbot's Parlour in Shrewsbury been still in existence, and had there been a priest at Hanwood like more than one who have been mentioned in these pages.

The real truth is, that one name, the name of Raleigh (owing to the Bristol craft in the Severn), was far better known than that of the mighty lawyer or the acute philosopher. There was no floatsman, sailor, or bargeman, but he spoke of Raleigh in his cups, that Shepherd of the Ocean to whom Spenser dedicated his 'Colin Clouts come home again.'

There may, or there may not, be sufficient evidence to bring him in guilty with others for attempting to place Arabella Stuart on the throne (this was in 1603) ; but her death in the Tower, 27th September, 1615, and the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh, 29th October, 1618, leave a blot upon the reign of James I. What Hume said is not, I believe, yet disproved :—'Everything remains still mysterious in this conspiracy, and history can give us no clue to unravel it.'[1] It has generally been thought that Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, pulled the secret strings that hastened Raleigh's

[1] Vol. vi. p. 8.

death. The archives of Simancas will probably unfold more than we yet know. If his conspiracy was a *Riddle of State*, his execution was a *Sacrifice of State*.

I may just note in passing that Raleigh's 'Farewell,' said to have been written on the night before his execution, and beginning—

> Go, soul, the body's guest,
> Upon a thankless errand,

had already appeared in Davison's 'Rhapsody' in 1608. The verses which follow were found, as reported, in his Bible, in the Gate House, Westminster :

SIR WALTER RALEIGH THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS DEATH.

> Even such is Time, that takes on trust
> Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
> And pays us but with age and dust ;
> Who in the dark and silent grave,
> When we have wandered all our ways,
> Shuts up the story of our days ;
> But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
> My God shall raise me up, I trust.

And a few more years are past and gone, and the prince must die like one of the people, and James I. is no more. 'After a short indisposition by the gout,' says Lord Clarendon, 'he fell into an ague, which, meeting with many humours in a fat, unwieldy body of fifty-eight years old, in four or five fits carried him out of the world.' 'Impatient when well,' says Arthur Wilson, 'he was patient in his sickness'; and the reader may refer with satisfaction to Taylor the Water Poet's Elegie which he wrote on his death :

> To shun that vice which doth include
> All other vices—Foul Ingratitude.

Even now it is no easy matter to give a good summary of this king's character, though we may smile at Hume's, who says :— 'Upon the whole it may be pronounced of his character that all his qualities were sullied with weakness, and embellished by humanity.' Of his inner and everyday life no better account can be found than that of Sir Walter Scott, in 'The Fortunes of Nigel.' The elder D'Israeli, as is well known,

has defended James's character, and denies that he was 'that degraded and feeble character in which he ranks by the contagious voice of criticism.' His enquiry into the literary and political character of James I., including a sketch of his age, will be found amongst his 'Miscellanies of Literature.' It is the result of long research, and if too favourable is still truthful.

Arthur Wilson's account of his death is as follows:

'A little before his death he called for the Prince, his son, who, rising out of his bed something before day, and presenting himself before him, the King roused up his spirits, and raised himself up as if he meant to speak to him; but rather being exhausted, he had no strength to express his intentions, but soon expired, being upon Sunday morning the 27th of March, 1625, at Theobalds, in the nine-and-fiftieth year of his age, and the two-and-twentieth year compleat of his reign; and was buried at Westminster with great solemnity the 7th of May following.'

The question of his being poisoned deserves no notice. The reader may see sufficient for his purpose in Mr. Brewer's notes to Fuller's 'Church History,' who tells how he was 'catechised on his death-bed in his Faith and Charity':

> So right will always live, and rise at length,
> But wrong can never take deep root to last.

And I began to talk with my time-honoured Friend of the many reigns he had known, and of the distant times of which his aged father had cognisance, reaching backwards to the Saxons, Danes, and Normans. To which he replied:—'It was pleasant to all HEARTS OF OAK to think that, however dark many ages were, there seemed, nevertheless, to be a sparkling glint of light and scintillation in each which was never allowed to die out, but still kept kindling into some feeble flame'; to which he added: 'Even my father, in his primitive way, constantly asserted that improvement was going on, and what he said was true; and, although I have myself seen sad and trying times, I have always found that the madness, whether of the princes or of the people, was overruled to good! As I heard the old beloved

priest of Hanwood say, when the oldest oaks around me were but oaklings, "The candle of the Lord has no thief in it; if He says, 'Let there be light,' that light, one way or other, is sure to shine forth."' He was a thoroughly good man, this old rector. When the land in the adjoining district —'with rank Geneva's weeds run o'er'—he stood up for the pure doctrines of the Church established in these kingdoms, and preached them faithfully. The 'adamantine book' of heaven he could not see unfolded, contented if he might practically comprehend

> If not Thy firm immutable decree,
> At least the second page of strong contingency,
> Such as consists with wills originally free.
>
> DRYDEN'S *Threnodia Augustalis*, xviii.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CIVIL WAR.

Good deeds crawl, but mischief flies.
MARSTON, *The Malcontent.*

We are engaged to mischief, and must on ;—
As rivers to find out the Ocean,
Flow with crookt bendings beneath forced banks
Or, as we see to aspire some mountain's top,
The way ascends not straight, but imitates
The subtil foldings of a Winter's snake,
So who knows policy and her true aspect,
Shall find her ways winding and indirect.
WEBSTER'S *Vittoria Corombona*, i. 29.

I shall not lead any more farther back in this journey, for the discovery of the entrance into these dark ways, than the beginning of this king's reign. For I am not so sharp-sighted as those who have discerned this rebellion contriving from (if not before) the death of Queen Elizabeth, and fomented by several princes and great ministers of state in Christendom, to the time that it brake out.—CLARENSON'S *Hist. of Reb.* Book I. vol. i. p. 5.

For of whom such massacre
Make they, but of their brethren ; men of men ?
Paradise Lost, xi. 629.

MY Talking Friend seemed hardly to know when Charles I. came to the throne. Indeed, in the former part of that unfortunate monarch's reign, the old town and the county were little enough concerned. The county kept pretty much to the county, and London was little visited by the gentry ; whether they followed the advice of the late king or no ; or whether they fell in with the two more recent orders of November 28, 1627, and that of June 20, 1631, which commanded noblemen and gentlemen to live upon their own estates. The truth is, that no people ever thought

higher of their own county than the Salopians; and the landlords, as a body, were almost constant residents, visiting 'THE TOWN,' as Shrewsbury was then, and is still, called by the country-people, for three weeks or a month after Christmas. And thus there were no fines raised in the Star-Chamber from the 'contumacious' of Shropshire.

What can be more interesting than the description of his father given by Edward, Earl of Clarendon, in his Autobiography? And of how many Shropshire gentlemen might the same almost have been said at this time?

'From that time'—that is the time of his marriage—'he lived a private life at Denton aforesaid, with great cheerfulness and content, and with a general reputation throughout the whole country; being a person of great knowledge and reputation, and of so great esteem for integrity that most persons near him referred all matters of contention and difference which did lie amongst them to his determination; by which that part of the county lived in more peace and quietness than many of their neighbours. During the time of Queen Elizabeth he served as a burgess for some neighbouring boroughs, in many parliaments; but from the death of Queen Elizabeth he never was in London, though he lived above thirty years after; and his wife, who was married to him above forty years, never was in London in her life—the wisdom and frugality of that time being such that few gentlemen made journeys to London, or any other expensive journeys, but upon important business, and their wives never; by which providence they enjoyed and improved their estates in the country, and kept good hospitality in their houses, brought up their children well, and were beloved by their neighbours; and in this rank, and with this reputation, this gentleman lived till he was seventy years of age—his younger brother, the chief justice, dying some years before him, and his two older brothers out-living him. The great affection between the brothers, and towards their sisters, of whom all enjoyed plenty and contentedness, was very notorious throughout the country, and of credit to them all.' A very pretty description surely.

Still, though our noblemen and gentry had no town-

houses—as we speak of London houses in these days—there was a constant connection with the metropolis; and in the very first year of the reign of Charles there was an alarm about the plague which had appeared in London. Somehow or another—probably through the flannel merchants or clothmongers, as they passed and repassed, whether to Montgomery or Welshpool—the Old Oak knew of it, and so corroborated the statement of the historians of Shrewsbury.

'6 July 1 Car. I, 1625. Aggreed, in respecte London is greavously affected with the plague, that no person shall repayre to this towne from thence, or from any other infected place, unless he will depose that he hath beene out of it 14 dayes; and that watch and warde be set at the gates.'

The alarm soon subsided, and it was not till some years later, though all the while it was probably lurking in its secret haunts, that Thomas Lloyde, Vicar of St. Alkmond's, presented a petition bearing date March 30, 1632; in which he states, 'that hee hath bin minister within this towne 31 yeares laste paste, and hath all the sayde tyme endeavoured himself in his ministry to give the beste contente he could, and abided continually both the laste and this plauge within the towne, and now and ever sithence the plauge began hath and doth reade morning prayers daily within the said parishe of St. Alkmond's, where the people of the saide town doe dayly resort in greater number than formerly they did, to your petitioner's greate danger, the infeccon breakinge, as it doth, sometymes in places which are never suspected.' Two years later a levy was made 'towards the present releife of the poor and infected persons within the towne and lib^ties of Shrewsbury.' All this time of sickness my Talking Friend remembered well, and Newnham, where Mr. Nicolls lived, was frequently resorted to. He had kinsfolk in the old town, and the high ground on which the house stood in those days was considered to be a very healthy spot, where fishing and shooting might be had at will. To use the words of Browne in his 'Britannia's Pastorals':

> There on a hill a swaine pipes out the day,
> Outbraving all the quiristers of May.

A huntsman here follows his cry of hounds,
Driving the hare along the fallow grounds:
Whilst one at hand, seeming the sport t' allow,
Follows the hounds, and careless leaves the plough.

But, though it was not so much felt on the Rea-side, or in the Old Town, as the plague was, there was at this time a national sickness gathering, which was to end fatally, some twenty years later, in a bloody death. In these remarkable lines of Lucretius's, which may not unaptly be applied here:

Ergo regibus occisis subversa jacebat
Pristina Majestas soliorum, et sceptra superba;
Et capitis summi præclarum insigne cruentum
Sub pedibus volgi magnum lugebat honorem:
Nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum.

The people of these days could hardly have said with Cardinal Newman in the history of his religious opinions: 'We live in a wonderful age; the enlargement of the circle of secular knowledge just now is simply a bewilderment, and the more so because it has the promise of continuing, and that with greater rapidity, and more signal results;' to which he adds, 'These discoveries, certain or probable, have in matter of fact an indirect bearing upon religious opinions and the question arises—How are the respective claims of revelation and natural science to be adjusted?' This question, at this time, could hardly have been asked, or if asked Lord Bacon could have given an answer. Still there was a great commotion and stir, and men's minds became restless, and in matters ecclesiastical as well as civil the plague was begun. Those who shall study the marvellously able but bitter pages of South will see all that concerns the Church, and has concerned the Church and State, in the κτῆμα ἐς ἀεὶ of Lord Clarendon, whose 'History of the Rebellion,' notwithstanding some errors and some prejudices is one of the grandest works that ever proceeded from the pen of a statesman—so that Southey could say, in his Life of Cromwell: 'There is no historian, ancient or modern, with whose writings it so much concerns an Englishman to be thoroughly conversant.' Who than Southey knew better the errors in that immortal work? and yet he could add: 'Clarendon, the wisest, the best of English statesmen, the most

authentic, the most candid, and the most instructive of English historians.' Since this was written much has come to light, and many disclosures are unfavourable to the character of Charles I., as Mr. Forster has clearly shown in his several works on the time, especially in his 'Biography of Sir John Eliot'; but Clarendon, with all his faults, if you will, must ever hold his place in the history of these sad and melancholy years, and in his pages the reader will find how the plague alluded to was at work.

Upon which the question is asked, Was Charles I. a party to it?

With our present knowledge we must answer at once that the house of the Stuarts was, and that James I. and Charles I. were both invaders of the popular liberties, and that it was well for us the real friends of liberty made the stand they did. The broad statement of a great truth is sufficient for such a work as this, which is rather local than concerned with that whole time.

Never was so unhappy a conclusion in any king as in that of Charles I. when he determined to govern without a parliament. This step, with some other unwise ones, and specially his endeavour to force episcopacy on Scotland, in their results, lost him his kingly crown. The anecdote of Bishop Andrewes, relative to parliaments, belongs to the reign of James I. It was told of him by Waller the poet, and is as follows: Waller being one day at court, while King James was at dinner, attended by the Bishop of Winchester, and Neile, Bishop of Durham, his majesty said to the prelates:

'"My lords, cannot I take my subjects' money when I want it, without all this formality of Parliament?"

'Bishop Neile quickly replied: "God forbid, sir, but that you should; you are the breath of our nostrils."

'On this the king said to the Bishop of Winchester: "Well, my lord, and what say you?"

'"Sir," replied Andrewes, 'I have no skill to judge of parliamentary cases.'

'The king answered, "No put-offs, my lord, answer me presently."

'"Then, sir," said he, "I think it lawful for you to take my

brother Neile's money, for he offers it."' The king, it is said, was much struck with the ready wit and tact of the aged prelate ; and it had been better for himself and for his son if they had realised the wisdom of it.

Meanwhile, as before hinted, parliamentary matters, even the Petition of Right, were scarcely known here. As a bee loved his hive, and a bird his nest, so did the Old Oak his native valley of the Rea, and he was equally ignorant of the 'charge brought into the house by Mr. Pym against Dr. Manwaring, that he, by his divinity, endeavoured to destroy the king and kingdom.' How, indeed, should this have reached him when the death even of the saintly Bishop Andrewes had never been reported beneath the shade of his time-worn boughs?

At a later date my Talking Friend had heard of the feoffees for the buying in of impropriations, looked upon from the first with a jealous eye by Archbishop Laud ; but this was much later than the time we are speaking of, and in connection with the name of Richard Baxter, who had received one of the early appointments at Kidderminster. The truth is, Baxter had relatives in Shrewsbury, and they had friends in the valley of the Rea. This will partially account for the great number of Baxter's treatises which, when I was a boy, were to be found in all our old houses—though 'The Poor Man's Family Book' made its way everywhere from its intrinsic goodness.

Bishop Hacket, in his Life of the Lord-keeper Williams, speaking of the artful and designing Dr. Preston, reports of him as of one who, by proposing the confiscation of Church property, declared that by such an act God's glory would be the better set forth ; on which the good bishop adds, in a parenthesis : 'That's ever the quail-pipe to bring worldlings into the snare of sacrilege.' Richard Baxter was never to be confounded with such a person. A playful humourist would attribute half the sourness of his life to his robbing of orchards as a boy. 'I was much addicted,' he says of himself, 'to the excessive gluttonous eating of apples and pears, which, I think, laid the foundation of that *imbecillity* and flatulency of my stomach, which caused the bodily calamities of my life. To this end, and to concur with naughty boys, that glorified

in evil, I have oft gone into other men's orchards, and I have taken their fruit, when I had enough at home.' Very different men were the Dr. Preston of Charles I.'s early days, and the great Nonconformist Richard Baxter, whose name I have introduced here because known in the Valley.

Some inquiries, my Talking Friend told me, were instituted about this time as to forestal infractions and encroachments, and a court was held about the old forest of the Stiperstones, visible from the Old Oak's head; but he did not recollect what became of it. He had only heard that 'animals of venery' were scarcer than they were formerly. I suspect this must have been somewhere about 1632. Under any circumstances what my Talking Friend said was not as a man would say who reckoned without his host, for the words which follow will be found in Lord Clarendon's 'History of the Rebellion.'

'To recompense the damage the crown sustained by the sale of the old lands and by the grant of new pensions, the old laws of the forest were revived, by which not only great fines were imposed, but great annual rents intended, and like to be settled by way of contract; which burden lighted most upon persons of quality and honour, who thought themselves above ordinary oppressions, and were therefore like to remember it with more sharpness.'

That the Old Oak should rather have wished to retain the rights of the forest is not much to be wondered at, notwithstanding the hard Rules of Forestation. In his time-honoured father's days almost all this county was forest, as has been seen in the earlier pages of this work, and although my wide-boughed Friend rejoiced in all improvements, the inner HEART OF OAK within his knotted and crimpled bark rejoiced to think that Oaklings might be permitted to grow into Oaks once more. Good, simple, antiquated tree! that was the furthest from the intentions of those who busied themselves in this matter! But many a wiseacre hath been as much taken in as he was!

> Each man can talke when that a thing is wonne,
> And with conceits his fancy oft beguile,
> Run through the hedge to after leap the style;
> This should be done out *after wittes* can saye,
> But few at first findes out the readier waye.

About this time the rector of Hanwood paid a visit to Ludlow, and brought back word how there had been great doings at the castle there, and how all the people round about flocked to the Earl of Bridgewater, the President of the Marches, to see 'The Mask'—evidently Milton's 'Mask of Comus,' which has been before referred to. Never was anything more magnificent, the old rector said, than the banqueting hall on that occasion. My Talking Friend quite well recollected the account he gave of it beneath his boughs. This well-known 'Mask' was performed at Ludlow in 1634.

About the same date, arose a question which shook the nation to the core. 'By advice of his privy council,' says Whitelock under 1634, 'and counsel learned, the king requires ship-money. The writ for it was at first but to maritime towns and counties; but that not sufficing, other writs were spread out to all counties to levy ship-money.' To which he presently adds, 'Although it was politicly laid with all equality, yet the great objection against it was because it was imposed without assent of Parliament, and that therefore it was unlawful'; which it clearly and evidently was. Shropshire, at this time, like other inland counties, had its cess imposed upon it, and was commanded to furnish the king with a ship of 450 tons, and the old town was included in this requisition, not, however without a quiet remonstrance. On which our historian remarks: 'But for the resistance of the intrepid Hampden, which did not occur till the succeeding year, this arbitrary tax, the object of which, however specious its occasion or trifling its amount, was no less than to enable the king to govern without parliaments, would have been received with general acquiescence, and have led to the gradual downfall of the British freedom.'

Of all this we have a fuller and a better understanding than our forefathers had. Yet, although the question of 'Mare liberum' and 'Mare clausum'—the first maintained by the celebrated Hugo Grotius, and the other by the scarcely less learned Selden—were matters unknown on the Rea-side, the question of 'ship money' had reached even these inland parts, and it was one much discussed. The account of John

Hampden's being sued in the Court of Exchequer created quite a disturbance in Shrewsbury, each party taking their sides. 'After the receipt of it for about four years together,' are the words of Lord Clarendon, 'it was at last (upon the refusal of a private gentleman to pay twenty or thirty shillings as his share), with great solemnity, argued publicly before all the judges of England in the exchequer chamber, and by much the major part of them, the king's right to impose asserted, and the tax adjudged lawful; which judgment proved of more advantage and credit to the gentleman condemned [Mr. Hampden] than to the king's service'; words which imply much.

But of much greater local concern was the new charter granted by Charles I., June 16, 1638. As on such occasions generally all people thought they should be gainers one way or another, though, in truth, there was little to be added to the charters previously granted. The great alteration was the appointment of a MAYOR in the place of the former two bailiffs; and henceforward there was 'to be within the town and liberties one mayor, twenty-four aldermen, and forty-eight assistants, these to be called the Common Council of the town, the aldermen and assistants to counsel and aid the mayor,' &c., &c., all which matters, as may be readily supposed, were discussed by those who passed and repassed the Old Oak on their journeyings through the valley of the Rea; and, indeed, more than once the rector of Hanwood and Peter Studley of Pontesbury discussed the matter at length, and talked much of rights and privileges.

Hearing this from my Talking Friend, I naturally turned to authorities, and I made out that Peter Studley, curate of St. Chad's, and in 1639 rector of the second portion of Pontesbury (that portion held by my old kind friend the Rev. Charles Drury, who has taken an interest in these desultory chapters), was brother of John Studley, one of the new aldermen of Shrewsbury under Charles I.'s new charter. In the year 1635 was published his 'Looking-Glasse of Schisme' against Enoch ap Evan, with an 'Answer to Richard More' (being the second edition). He was, as is well known from local history, quite and altogether opposed to the Puritanical faction,

which at this time would appear to have been in the ascendant. Attending upon his brother in Shrewsbury, he noted that the mayor's sheathed sword was never borne erect when they had to visit St. Chad's Church—as was right in any place, church or chapel, consecrated to the honour and worship of God! Surely the MASTER has said, *Put up thy sword into the sheath*! (John xviii. 11).

Meanwhile, though the nation was shaken from its centre, and the people generally were restless and disturbed, like the lower animals of the creation before some great storm, the valley of the Rea knew little of what was going on. Perhaps none but the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury, the gentry excepted, knew that on November 3, 1640, began 'the long-lasting Parliament, so known to all posterity,' as Fuller speaks, 'for the remarkable transactions therein.'

It is of this Parliament that Whitelock says: 'The third day of November the Parliament was to meet; some persuaded the archbishop to get it adjourned for two or three days, because that the third of November was an ominous day, the Parliament called on that day 20 Hen. VIII., beginning with the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, and ending in the dissolution of abbeys; but the archbishop took little heed of such things.'

It is this Parliament of which L'Estrange says in his 'Annals':—'The Parliament was approaching, whose convening was attended by this kingdom with so much longing, such impatience of desires, as every moment which retarded it was interpreted a thing of grievance to the subject; for we began now to think nothing could make us happy but a Parliament, and that no Parliament could make us miserable. This was the sense of the greater part of this nation, and if this Parliament succeeded not adequate to some men's vote, perhaps the miscarriage of their hopes may be somewhat imputed to this sense. Overruling Providence delights oft to order the operations of agents, both free and natural, counter to man's expectation, to teach us the vanity of that faith which is founded upon causes subaltern.' But, as I hinted, however notorious this Parliament became for impeachments to death —to wit, in the Earl of Strafford's and in Laud's cases—how-

ever the nation trembled before such a new jurisdiction and such a dread tribunal, the waters of the Rea still flowed on softly, and the valley was little concerned in it. How should the people there know that the unwise and hasty dissolution of the Short Parliament entailed, in search of liberty, the incubus of the Long one?

It was from this Parliament that one of the members of the old town was dismissed as a *malignant*, because he voted for the acquittal of the Earl of Strafford; this was Newport, afterwards created Earl of Bradford by William III. It was with reference to this historical fact that my Talking Friend told me how the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury frequently spoke of certain new political terms which had been introduced within these late years, mentioning at the same time the use of certain other words which they did not think altogether suitable to the usage of the English language—derogatory, indeed, to its purity.

And so, as is my wont, I fell athinking, and called to mind how in disturbed and disjointed times new names are apt to be introduced, and how Thucydides tells us, touching the sedition at Corcyra, that 'the received value of names imposed for the signification of things was changed to arbitrary,' just as men thought proper, whether it was improper or not, which usually was the case, in accordance with uncurbed passions and prejudices. The term *malignant* above alluded to was a striking instance, it being the present *sobriquet* applied by those who were opposed to the existing state of things, and, as Lord Clarendon tells us, 'it was the term they imposed upon all those they meant to render odious to the people.' In like manner he states that the term *scandalous clergy* was 'frequently applied to men of great gravity and learning and the most unblemished lives.' As to the word *malignant*, Fuller, in his petty way, after having alluded to its derivation, tells us that it caused 'a combustion all over England,' being fixed as a 'note of disgrace on those of the king's party.'

One day, about this time, said my Talking Friend, Richard Poole, who had held Hanwood, came over from St. Chad's on a visit to old Edward Warter of Meole, and

told him, at which he was much distressed, that sad work was going on in Shrewsbury, that they were pillaging the churches and taking away the altars. Poole, probably, was not greatly displeased at seeing some superstitious vanities removed, for he was one who thought with Whitelocke's father, that Archbishop Laud 'was too full of fire, though a just and a good man; and that his want of experience in state matters, and his too much zeal for the Church, and heat, if he proceeded in the way he was then in, would set this nation on fire'; against which we may set the observation of old Fuller, that 'such a slovenly unmannerliness had lately possessed many people in their approaches to God's house, that it was high time to reform.'

With whatever motive—I should conjecture a most friendly one, as knowing the ancient connection—Richard Poole told his old friend, Edward Warter, of Meole, that they were pulling down the altar at St. Mary's, and threatened to take down the cross from the old chapel in which his ancestor, Degory Warter, who founded the Alms Houses, had always taken so great an interest.

The Commission for 'defacing, demolishing, and quite taking away of all images, altars, and tables turned altar-wise, crucifixes, superstitious pictures, manuscripts, and relics of idolatry, out of all churches or chapels,' dates January 23, 1641, and in that same year I find the altar was pulled down at St. Mary's. It was at a later date that the cross alluded to was really taken down, at the cost of 3*s.*, as may be seen by the extracts given by the historians of Shrewsbury. All that my Talking Friend added about the matter was this, that the conversation of the two aged men was of the most serious sort, and that they feared much for war shortly to come to pass, since words of party and not of peace were in every man's mouth, 'and the prudent and the ancient' seemed as though they had been judicially taken away. Doubtless they were bad times when such doggerel as this was rampant:

> Your bishops are but sheep;
> Your deans are dunces;
> Your priests are the priests of Baal—
> The devil fetch them all by bunches!

But, as the good Bishop Hacket said before the house, 'On the ruins of the rewards of learning no structure can be raised, and upon the chaos of ignorance nothing can be built but profaneness and confusion.'

In the Year 1642. August 22.

Under this ominous date we read in Whitelock's 'Memorials of English affairs,' 'The king at Nottingham erects his standard, to which not so many resorted as was expected.' And in the next page, 'The king marched from Nottingham to Stafford and Leicester, and so to Wales: and at Shrewsbury his army increased to a considerable body.'

Thus we are brought into connection with the old town, and, incidentally, now and then, with the Valley of the Rea, which furnished, sometimes with profit and sometimes with loss, its quota of supplies. As regards the Rebellion generally, the remarks which follow, from the 'Annals of England,' are, I think, fairly and truly put, though to be prefaced by the lines of Wordsworth's sonnet

> O terrible excess
> Of headstrong will! Can this be piety?
> No! some fierce maniac hath usurped her name,
> And scourges England struggling to be free:
> Her peace destroyed! her hopes a wilderness!
> Her blessings cursed, her glory turned to shame!

At the commencement of the Great Rebellion the county was more attached to the cause of the king than the town, and this great body was ready to 'adventure their lives and fortunes in defence of his royal and sacred person.' Such was the statement made by the Grand Jury at the assizes held at Shrewsbury, August 8, 1642. The Parliament was, of course, much offended at it, and called this and the Worcester Jury a packed one.' Nevertheless, the king's interests were upheld.

There lived at this time in the Valley of the Rea one Amos Hammond—old Hammond, the shoemaker, who passed for an old man in my boyhood, and lived at Hanwood, was his lineal descendant. This worthy, as it chanced, was at

Wellington when the king was on the march to Shrewsbury, and heard his speech and protestation at the head of his forces. He often spoke of it beneath the shadow of my Talking Friend.

Owing to the busy activity of the parliamentary agents at Chester the king went there on the 20th, but returned to Shrewsbury on the 27th. Immediately after his return he addressed the gentry of the county and the commonalty, lamenting, as Clarendon tells us, 'the insolence and violence of that army raised against him'; to which he added 'no man should be a loser by him if he could help it, saying, 'he had sent for a mint, and would melt down all his own plate, and expose all his land to sale or mortgage, that he might bring the best pressure upon them.' It has been said that the address and speech of Charles I. was stiff and unprepossessing; but it was clearly not so on the present occasion, for the same great historian reports, 'With this gracious and princely demeanour it is hardly credible how much he won upon the people; so that not only his army daily increased by volunteers (for there was not a man pressed) but such proportions of plate and money were voluntarily brought in that the army was fully and constantly paid, the king having erected a mint at Shrewsbury, more for reputation than use (but, for want of workmen and instruments, they could not coin a thousand pounds a week), and causing all his own plate, for the service of his household, to be delivered there, made other men think theirs was the less worth the preserving.'

For the whole account of the mint at Shrewsbury the reader is referred to our historians of the town, who thus introduce their narrative: 'The mint alluded to in his majesty's speech was that which had been set up in the Castle of Aberystwith in 1637, under the superintendence of Thomas Bushell, to coin the silver extracted from the valuable lead mines in that neighbourhood; which having, as is said, been worked by the Romans, and afterwards by Customer Smith and the famous Sir Hugh Myddelton, were now held by Mr. Bushell, as possessor of the lease by assignment from Sir Hugh's widow. The whole account of Mr. Bushell and his

connection with the great Lord Bacon, as purse-bearer, is very curious. A plate of the different pieces—20*s.*, 10*s.*, 5*s.*, and 2*s.* 6*d.*—is given in the same valuable work, but it does not appear that the money coined at Shrewsbury had any particular mark.' The historians add that as the king sent at this time for a printing press to print his declarations, &c., it would seem most probable that there had not been one here before—a question which has been alluded to in a former page.

Nobody knew better than the king the value of a free press, and he used it accordingly. It was when the parliament found out that it was a double-edged sword that would cut both ways that they put on the old restraints; and this act of theirs it was which caused Milton to write his 'AREOPAGITICA, for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing,' which was published in 1644. It is directed against the Presbyterians, who were for curtailing that liberty in others which they had cried up for themselves; and with respect to whom he says in his poem 'On the new Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament'—referring to the Directory:

New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large.

But to return to our history. On asking my Talking Friend if he had ever seen or heard of any of the Shrewsbury coinage, he told me that scarcely any got abroad into the country; but that old Amos Hammond had one 2*s.* 6*d.* piece, which he said was distributed amongst three at Edgehill. And it would appear that what he said was correct, as the coins minted at Shrewsbury appear to have been distributed at Wolverhampton to the soldiers two days before the battle took place, very much to their satisfaction. The half-crowns were given amongst the privates.

It appears that the king left Shrewsbury on October 12, with the intent to march to London, though his force was admitted to be inferior to the enemy's. The day before he left he borrowed 600*l.* from the school-chest. A long while after it was ineffectually sued for in the Court of Chancery. On his leaving he appointed Francis Ottley Esq. of Pitchford, to defend the town, whom he knighted, and who was after-

wards so well known as Sir Francis Ottley, Governor of Shrewsbury. There was a short cut from Meole to Pitchford by Arlscote and Condover, and the consequence was that the Old Oak heard a good deal from goers and comers, for the family of the Ottleys was one held in the highest respect. Besides this, there was a pitch-spring there which was held in high repute by the country-people in scorbutic disorders, and when used with *raddle*, out of the Raddle Brook, no such remedy was known for the cure of obstinate boils and carbuncular swellings.

Clarendon's remark on the state of the army whilst the king was at Shrewsbury must not be omitted. 'This must be confessed, that either by the care and diligence of the officers, or by the good inclinations and temper of the soldiers themselves, the army was in so good order and discipline that, during the king's stay at Shrewsbury, there was not any remarkable disorder; the country being very kind to the soldiers, and the soldiers just and regardful to the country. And by the fines, loans and contributions of the gentlemen and substantial inhabitants, but especially by the assistance of the nobility who attended, the army was so well paid that there was not the least mutiny or discontent for want of pay, nor was there any cause; for they seldom failed every week, and never went a fortnight unpaid.'

Meanwhile the fortunes of the king and the parliament were swaying to and fro; but my Talking Friend seemed to know little about their movements. All that he had heard was that Colonel Mytton seized on Wem, and settled the first garrison there which the parliament had in Shropshire. This alarmed the king's party in Shrewsbury; and Lord Capel, when he came there, finding the Castle in a most ruinous state, immediately commenced repairing it. Several people from Hanwood were employed in the work, as well as in the erection of Cadogan's fort in Frankwell. But the country at large was by no means benefited by wars and rumours of wars. Owing to the state of confusion which resulted from the restlessness of the times, Shrewsbury was, more or less, shut up; and the neighbouring towns, even, which depended upon it for articles of foreign commerce, had

great cause for complaint. To quote the words of our historians: '"We are here," says the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in a letter to his brother Sir Henry, written apparently from Montgomery Castle, about June, in the year 1643, "almost in as great straits as if the warre were amongst us. Shrewsbury, which is our ordinary magazine, being exhausted of wine, vinegar, hops, paper; and pepper at 4*s*. a pound; and shortly a want of all commodities that are not native with us will follow; the intercourse between us and London being interdicted."' As late as 1816 and 1817 Montgomery and the townships on the way still relied on Shrewsbury, and I quite well recollect that very good man, and sometime mayor of the old town, Mr. Samuel Harley, passing through Hanwood and Meole on his way there, early on a summer's morning, and on his well-known palfrey, liking to take his wholesale orders himself, and to see his friends. The good man lost more fortunes by his kindness and benevolence of heart than many have gained, to the great discomfort of their souls, and with no benefit to their families. Commend me to such men of our ancient guilds, and may I not prosper in my old age if I ever forget the kindnesses of dear old Sam Harley to me in my youth! Who ever called him by any other name?

Of Prince Rupert's being appointed Captain-General of his Majesty's forces in Shrewsbury and the adjoining parts; of his arrival in Shrewsbury February 18, this same year, and of the appointment of his brother Maurice a year or two later, my Talking Friend knew nothing, though it was all historically true, and may be found in the records of the town. One point, however, he seemed to remember well, and it was this: that almost all the produce of the valley of the Rea was carried off to Shrewsbury to supply the troopers. This was clearly in the year 1644, because in October that year the corporation of the town, amongst other complaints, laid this before the Governor: 'That the horse here quartered have eaten the greatest part of the meadowinge and pasture-grounde in and about the suburbes of the Town, and that the Town is not furnisht with haye.' My Talking Friend said that all the hay from the Hanwood quarters, the Meole

Brace Meadow, and the Harrisals was carried off to Shrewsbury.

Meanwhile—that is to say, in June, 1643—another fight had taken place, and a great man had fallen, that is to say, the fight of Chalgrove Field, four miles from Bensington in Oxfordshire, in which the Royalists under Prince Rupert defeated the Parliamentarians under the Earl of Essex. Little of all this was known by the Rea-side, but the death of such a man as Hampden was sure to be talked of, and my Talking Friend had often heard his name mentioned with honour. The reader will do well cautiously to weigh Lord Clarendon's account of him, twice given in his great work on the Rebellion; for although he certainly does say that what was said of Cinna might be applied to him, 'he had a head to contrive, and a tongue to persuade, and a hand to execute any mischief'; yet he had said before, 'I am persuaded his power and interest at that time was greater to good or hurt than any man's in the kingdom, or than any man of his rank hath had at any time; for his reputation for honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided, that no corrupt or private ends could bias them.'

Of such a man it was likely the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury would speak; and so they did, as did likewise the squires of Onslow, Cruckton, and Meole. The reader who would wish to glean a full summary of what can be said for and against this very remarkable man is referred to what Southey said in his article in the 'Quarterly' on Lord Nugent's 'Memorials of Hampden.'

Towards the end of February 1645, it was circulated throughout the whole valley of the Rea that Shrewsbury was in the hands of the Parliament, and great numbers of fugitives passed under the Old Oak. It was very generally reported that the town was betrayed into the hands of the enemy, and the name of Huson, or Hewson, seems connected with this treacherous proceeding. Sir William Brereton, Colonel Mytton, and Lieutenant-Colonel Reinking, were soldiers on the opposite side, and they but followed their fortunes; but it is painful to find 'a minister,' such as Huson is named, comprehended under the category of traitor:

For treason is but trusted like the fox,
Who ne'er so tame, so cherished, and locked up,
Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.

It has been stated before that the celebrated Richard Baxter was always held in high repute in this neighbourhood. Sir Fulke Hankes was the brother of Baxter's stepmother, but never governor of Shrewsbury, as Baxter states him to have been in his 'Life and Times.' This matter is thoroughly cleared up by our historians. It is pleasing to hear the good man say, because it shows the turn of his mind, which was always for peace—'While I lived here,' that is, at Coventry, 'in peace and liberty, as men in a dry house do hear the stormes abroad, so did we daily hear the news of one fight or another, or one garrison or other won or lost. So miserable were those bloody days, in which he was the most honourable that could kill most of his enemies.' To which he adds, 'But amongst all these I was especially pleased with the surprise of Shrewsbury, both because it was done without loss of blood, and because my father and many of my dear friends were thereby redeemed.' His father was one of the collectors of the king's taxes, and had been thrown in prison for his leniency. The consequence was that when the town was taken he was set at liberty.

Great were the rejoicings on the fall of the Old Town, for, as we have seen, it was one of mark, and the 20th of February was kept as a Day of Thanksgiving. The Parliament had ordered the 12th of March to be observed throughout the city of London for the success of their forces, and Colonel Mytton being there, is thanked by the House on the 29th. The Old Town, however, benefited but little by the changes wrought in it. Indeed, it seems to have been burdened the more, and Colonel Mytton, a Presbyterian, as generally thought, was simply slighted by the Independents. Under any circumstances, it must have been expressly galling to have been taxed for the maintenance of the Scotch army in England, having been heretofore exempt from any such like tax, as were the counties of Worcester, Hereford, and Stafford.

The only point of interest which my Talking Friend spoke of particularly as occurring about this time was the

siege of Lathom House, near Ormskirk. It was one Andrew Lloyd who spoke of it under his shade, being one of the three soldiers who accompanied Captain Radcliffe when the enemy were beaten from their works and batteries, and their cannon spiked. This would appear to have been in 1644, for it is under that year that the fact here alluded to is recorded in the well-known journal. A grand woman was the Countess of Derby! The Old Oak delighted to hear of such feats, and shook his leaves right heartily, and as with a laugh, when he heard how General Fairfax was chafed at the courage and determined resolution of a woman. Whitelock's simple entry is 'Lathom House, defended two years by the Countess of Derby, was surrendered to the Parliament upon articles.' This refers to its siege by Colonel Egerton, when it was compelled to surrender for want of ammunition.

Lloyd is a common name still in the parish of Hanwood, and the good old widow now 84 may be a descendant of Andrew's. She lives by the Rea-side, reads her Bible, goes to church, and is happy! There is nothing in her of the 'dividual moveable religion,' of which Milton speaks so pithily in one of the most striking passages of the 'Areopagitica.'

Shortly after this the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury spoke of the death of a great Churchman, that of Archbishop Laud, who was beheaded January 10, 1645; concerning whom they held different opinions, though both believed him to be a good man. Up to this day opinions about him are equally divided—perhaps few praise him without being set down as bigots. But, take all the histories of the time together, weigh Clarendon's character of him with that of his sternest opponents, set his goodness of heart against his occasional sharpness of speech, view him as a man and a Christian, and, depend upon it, those who judge most charitably, will judge most wisely. Southey in his 'Book of the Church,' and Wordsworth in a note to his 'Ecclesiastical Sonnets,' have spoken of him as such wise and good men should speak, apart from prejudice. Whitelock speaks guardedly; but, with that honesty and fair dealing which belongs to him, leaves the reader in possession of his concluding words:

'I forgive all the world, all and every one, bitter enemies

or others, whatsoever they have been, which have any ways prosecuted me in this cause, and I honestly desire to be forgiven, first of God, then of man: whether I have offended them or they think I have, Lord forgive them; and now I desire you to join with me in prayer.' These were the last words of Laud.

My Talking Friend said that the rector of Hanwood always defended him.

Of the battles of Marston Moor, July 3, 1644, and of Naseby, July 14, 1645, both so fatal to the fortunes of the royal cause, little or nothing was known here. All that my Talking Friend recollected was that the Royalists were more than usually dispirited about this time.

In these disturbed times several very able men suffered at Shrewsbury for their attachment to the king, who were all known to the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury. Timothy Hammond, indeed, rector of the second portion of the latter place, was greatly interested about them all. Amongst others may be mentioned Thomas Good, the author of 'Firmianus and Dubitantius,' afterwards Master of Balliol, and Richard Heath, who assisted Walton in correcting the sheets of the Polyglot Bible, a copy of which, given to him by Walton for his trouble, is now in the school library, to which Heath presented it. He is called by Baxter 'an ancient, grave minister, moderate, sedate, quiet, religious, eminent for his skill in the Oriental languages.' Baxter's old friend Dr. Thomas Good had offended him, and he therefore does not speak so fairly of him as he ought to have done. The old apples still fermented in the excellent Nonconformist's stomach. Both of these very able and good men were vicars of St. Alkmond's.

In those sad times of misrule and confusion the Free Schools also lost a firstrate man in the Rev. Thomas Chaloner, who was considered an eminent Greek scholar. In his days the schools prospered as they did in dear old Bishop Butler's. Loyal himself, he instilled loyalty into his scholars. For this cause he was ejected by those in power, in 1646, but was reinstated at the Restoration. This was in 1662. He died in 1664, greatly regretted. No wonder that

we find the remarks which follow in the little history so often referred to:

'In the dreadful convulsion which ensued upon the subversion of the monarchy the regular administration of religion was grievously interrupted. It is believed that a very great majority of the parishes in the kingdom had no regular minister for a number of years, but were obliged to be contented with such occasional duty as they could procure. The parish of St. Julian was not exempted from the disasters of the times. It appears by the parish books that during a considerable part of the period which elapsed between the death of Charles I. and the restoration of the Church and monarchy in 1661, no minister was attached to this church, nor was divine service regularly performed.'

As I sat in pleasant company one summer's evening, beneath the shade of my Venerable Friend, whose leaves shook out all their harmony as a sudden electric current passed through them and was gone, it chanced that one of the great brewers' drays, loaded with casks of beer passed by, and from the well-known shaking of his freshest and youngest boughs, I knew that the good old Oak had something to communicate, and I listened attentively, for when composing himself to speak in his own peculiar way, he did not like to be hurried.

'Somewhen about this time the then rector of Hanwood, perceiving the beer-loving propensities of his neighbours, which they carried to excess, and which he wished to correct, betook himself to the drinking a concoction but very recently introduced, called "cofa." I am afraid, however, it had very little effect, for John Barleycorn held his own, and always has held his own throughout this valley from Caux Castle to Coleham, and, what is more, always will. It is the native drink of the people, though I have heard it said beneath these boughs of mine that they owe its excess to the Dutch wars and the Dutch boers. But, depend upon it, since barley has been grown here, all the valley has stuck to it.'

Meanwhile I fell a-thinking, as is my wont, about the introduction of coffee, and recollected at once how old Burton said in his 'Anatomie of Melancholy':

'The Turks have a drink called *coffa* (for they use no wine), so named of a berry as black as soot, and as bitter (like that black drink which was in use amongst the Lacedæmonians and perhaps the same) which they sip still of, and sup as warm as they can suffer; they spend much time in their coffee-houses, which are somewhat like our ale-houses and taverns; and there they sit chattering and drinking to drive away the time, and to be merry together, because they finde by experience that kinde of drinke so used helpeth digestion and procureth alacrity. Some of them take opium to this purpose.' So speaketh queer old Democritus Junior.

Mr. Lane, in his 'Modern Egyptians,' informs us that 'the pipe and the cup of coffee are enjoyed by almost all persons who can afford such a luxury, very early in the morning and oftentimes during the day.' In different parts of that remarkable volume he gives an account of its discovery, and of its introduction into Egypt in the beginning of the sixteenth century— of the coffee-shop—of the manner of preparing it, and of the coffee-cup and service. The following summary is that quoted by his gifted sister, Mrs. Poole, in her 'English-woman in Egypt,' from 'The Thousand and One Nights,' where Mr. Lane's words are: 'The use of coffee, which became common in Egypt, Syria, and other countries besides Arabia, a century earlier than tobacco, doubtless tended to render the habit of drinking wine less general. That it was adopted as a substitute for wine appears from its name *Kahweh*, an old Arabian term for wine; whence the Turkish *Kahveh*, the Italian *Caffé*, and our *Coffee*'—of which the consumption is now immense. In 1855 Professor Johnston put down the European consumption at 200,000,000 of pounds—the known produce of the East and West at 600,000,000.

Without his introduction to Chap. VIII. this account will be imperfect:

'The tree which produces the seed is said to be indigenous to the countries of Enarea and Caffa in southern Abyssinia. In these districts the coffee-tree grows like a wild oat over the rocky surface of the country. The roasted seed or bean has also been used as a beverage in Abyssinia generally, from time immemorial, and is at the present day extensively cultivated in the

country. In Persia it is known to have been in use as early as the year 875. From Abyssinia it was introduced into Arabia in the beginning of the fifteenth century, when it partly superseded the older "chaat," or Abyssinian tea. About the middle of the seventeenth century (1652) the first coffee-shop was opened at Paris by a Greek, named Pasqua, and twenty years after the first was established at Marseilles. Since that time the culture and consumption of coffee have continually extended. It has become the staple produce of important colonies, and the daily and most cherished drink of probably more than a hundred millions of men!'

Such was the beverage the rector of Hanwood wished to introduce at this time and to put down the swill-bowls at the ale-bench, but he failed in his good intents, as so many have failed since, and will fail again. As long as barley grows 'John Barleycorn' will be in no mean estimation.

> Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret,
> Et mala perrumpet furtim fastidia victrix.

But to return to the history of the times.

Of the seizure of the king at Holmby, on June 3, 1647, well nigh a full year after he had delivered himself to the Scots at Newark—and of which so graphic a description is given by Lord Clarendon—nothing for a long time was known on the Rea-side. The first account of it was brought, as before, from Pitchford, where some of the inhabitants of the valley had been to bring home the medicinal waters from the far-famed well. The wise women would have liked to quote Pliny's authority, had they known of such a person, and to appeal to him as a testimony—'Carbunculos purgat, et putrescentia ulcera.'.

The year after this there was a great alarm throughout the whole of the country—particularly at Shrewsbury and in the valley of the Rea—that the plague had broken out. And true enough it had done so, and the Hanwood and Meole people were like to know of it, for, according to St. Chad's register, it broke out at John Comes's home in Frankwell, the suburb by which they entered and returned.

Whitelock first mentions it as a fact known in London

under July 2, and curtly enough, 'Letters that the plague was broken out in Shrewsburie'; adding, under July 10, 'Letters of the spreading of the plague in Shrewsbury; that the governor commanded all the soldiers that were ill to be in the field, and all that were well to continue in the castle and not to stir out of it,' and again, under July 26, 'that the plague was on the increase in Shrewsbury.' At last, under November 21, there is the pleasing intelligence 'that the plague was ceased in Shrewsbury'; which, although not exactly true, as will be seen by-and-by, was very near the truth.

Our historians give the letter of Jo. BRADSHAWE, president of the Council of State, appointed by the authority of parliament, addressed to the mayor under August 9, 1650, in which all 'due precaution is ordered to be taken for the Garrison, and the Schooles in the Town are to be dismissed,' which letter coupled with the intelligence in the 'Perfect Diurnal' shows the correctness of Whitelock.

Everyone spoke of the exemplary conduct of Thomas Hayes, the Mayor of Shrewsbury, at this time, and when the days of his mayoralty were over, the town presented him with a silver tankard, and high cap and cover, with the arms of the town, which is still preserved in the family. As for the plague itself it appears to have continued, more or less, through the months of June, July, August, September, October, and November; by the eleventh of December it is stated to have ceased, 'the inhabitants resorting apace to their habitations, and the market kept as freely as in former times.' There died in the parish of St. Chad, the register of which alone mentions the visitation, and its continuance till the following January, two hundred and fifty persons. Our historians add in a note: 'There is a tradition that the butchers were not attacked by the plague, and it is true that the burials in St. Alkmond's registered for the year are rather fewer than ordinary.' However unpleasant, it has been not uncommonly supposed that a butcher's occupation is a healthy one, and the late Dr. Darwin, within my recollection (following in this the custom of Dr. Beddoes of Bristol), always made the nursemaids, once a day, take consumptive children through the Double

Butchers' Row; and, as often as they could, into cowhouses, to inhale the fresh breath of the animals.

The next great matter that was bruited abroad in the old town was the king's signal defeat at Worcester, September 3, 1651; for, at this time, all loyalists called Charles II. their king, and rejoiced at his escape.

Of this great battle, the ruin of the loyalist cause, Cromwell wrote to the Parliament in these words, as given by Whitelock: 'The battle was fought with various success for some hours, but still hopeful of your part, and in the end became an absolute victory; and so full a one as proved a total defeat and ruin of the enemy's army and possession of the town; on our entering at the enemy's heels, and fighting in the streets, with very great courage, we took all their baggage and artillery.' To which he presently adds, in his own peculiar language, which some say was the key to his rule and authority: 'The dimensions of his mercy are above my thoughts: it is, for aught I know, a crowning mercy: surely, if it be not, such a one we shall have, if this provoke those who are concerned in it to thankfulness, and parliament to do the will of Him who hath done His will for it and for the nation; whose good pleasure is to establish the nation, and the charge of the government, by making the people so willing to the defence thereof, and so signally to bless the endeavours of your servants in this late great work.' Meanwhile a proclamation was issued for the apprehension of the king, and a promise of 1,000*l.* to any that shall do it; but in vain, for, it is well known, he escaped 'in a little bark at Brighthelmstone, a small fisher-town, where he was early on board, and by God's blessing arrived safely in Normandy.' Such are the words in which Lord Clarendon spoke of the now flourishing watering-place of Brighton, when he recorded the particulars of the king's escape, as he had them from his own mouth. Very old people still call Brighton Brighthelmstone—but the name is dying out.

In Shropshire, from that time till this, the escape of the king, Boscobel, and the White Ladies are as household words in every child's mouth, and there was not a boy at Shrewsbury school who could not tell the tale as Hume has done. It is

evidently a point on which he lingered. The introduction is very happy :—

'The king left Worcester at six o'clock in the afternoon, and without halting, travelled about twenty-six miles in company with fifty or sixty of his friends. To provide for his safety he thought it best to separate himself from his companions, and he left them without communicating his intention to any of them. By the Earl of Derby's directions he went to Boscobel, a lone house on the borders of Staffordshire, inhabited by one Penderell, a farmer. To this man Charles intrusted himself. The man had dignity of sentiments much above his condition, and though death was denounced against all who concealed the king, and a great reward promised to anyone who should betray him, he professed and maintained unshaken fidelity. He took the assistance of his four brothers, equally honourable with himself, and having clothed the king in a garb like their own, they led him into the neighbouring wood, put a bill into his hand, and pretended to employ themselves in cutting faggots. Some nights he lay upon straw in the house, and fed on such homely fare as it afforded. For a better concealment he mounted upon an oak, where he sheltered himself among the leaves and branches for twenty-four hours. He saw several soldiers pass by. All of them were intent in search of the king, and some expressed, in his hearing, their earnest wishes for seizing him. This tree was afterward denominated the ROYAL OAK, and for many years was regarded by the neighbourhood with great veneration.'

This was that venerable oak which was like a household word in everyone's mouth when I was a child, and my Talking Friend said, naturally enough, that the abandonment of the projected order of the Royal Oak was a great mistake on the part of Charles II. But so was Milton mistaken when, with reference to the Second Charles's days, he said so feelingly—

> I had hope
> When violence was ceased, and war on earth,
> All should have then gone well, peace would have crowned
> With length of happy days the race of man ;
> But I was far deceived ; for now I see
> Peace to corrupt, no less than war and waste.

Those who would know more about the king's escape must refer to the 'Boscobel Tracts' by my late lamented friend, the witty John Hughes, Esq., some time of Oriel College, Oxford. Everything appertaining to the escape of the royal fugitive and his subsequent adventures after the fight at Worcester till his arrival in France is collected in that interesting volume. The introductory diary contains a summary of the whole. The volume contains plates of Boscobel House and of the Royal Oak, besides others of Moreby Hall and Trent House, and that very humorous one of King Charles making his escape with the five Pendrels, together with a plan of the Battle of Worcester and a chart of the king's journey. Out of regard to my Talking Friend I venture to transcribe the passage which follows, touching Boscobel and its tree:

'The demesne, with its ancient woods, stands on the sheltered side of a wild sandy common, a mile to the south of the small inn of Ivetsey Bank, on the road from Lichfield to Shrewsbury. The house itself presents the appearance of an old-fashioned forest lodge, as in days of yore. A few hundred yards to the south-west of it, in a field commanding a fine distant view of the Wrekin and Clee Hills, stands the present representative of the Royal Oak, itself a tree of some antiquity. It was planted many years ago on the original spot, from an acorn of the parent tree, which soon fell a sacrifice to the destructive zeal of the loyal during Charles's brief popularity.'

It has been recorded that Charles II., on visiting the site of the Royal Oak after the Restoration, took back with him some acorns and planted them in St. James's Park. He watered the oaklings with his own hands, and the people saw him do it, as they saw him feeding his pet water-fowl. My Talking Friend said 'it became him well, and that he ought not to have turned out the very worthless character the world says he did.' Every Shrewsbury boy, in my day, wore the leaves in his hat on Royal Oak day, repeating the old saw,

Royal Oak
The Whigs to provoke.

Many a spray from his time honoured boughs did my Talking

Friend contribute, and he had a vast contempt for some mischievous town boys—the Parliament would have called them 'Malignants'—who robbed good old Dr. Darwin's garden on the Shelton road, and injured his beautiful plane tree, to cry

> Plane-tree leaves !
> The Church-folk are thieves.

December 28, 1653, Oliver Cromwell was proclaimed in Shrewsbury by General or Governor Mackworth, who died the next year and was buried in King Henry VII.'s chapel at Westminster, being one of Cromwell's privy council. It was in the early part of this year that the notorious scene took place in the House of Commons which is so honestly and faithfully recounted by Whitelock in his Memorials, under April 20; but the particulars were some time in reaching the banks of the Rea. It was, indeed, many months after that Mr. Francis Tallents told the rector of Hanwood particulars he had never heard before. This was the Mr. Tallents, 'a godly and blameless divine,' whose services Richard Baxter obtained for the old town and for St. Mary's, and though the rector of Hanwood did not agree with him in many points, yet he had an entire love for the man and for his goodness. As far as I could pick up, Mr. Tallents's account of the scene accorded very nearly with Whitelock's.

In the year 1655 another attempt was made to get Shrewsbury into the hands of the king, but it failed. It was known in the Rea valley more particularly, because Sir Thomas Harries of Boreatton Park was a kinsman of the Harrieses of Cruckton. But my Talking Friend had forgotten all particulars except that the parties were not true to each other. The most satisfactory part of the matter was that no blood was shed on the occasion. Between this time and the Restoration nothing else occurred in which the inhabitants of the Rea valley took much interest. Cromwell passed away September 3, 1658, and the protectorate of Richard Cromwell ceased April 22, 1659. Of Richard they knew little, and cared for less. The truth is, that as a whole they were a very loyal people, and like 'other gentlemen of Shropshire,' as Lord Clarendon reports, 'were ready at the same time to

secure Shrewsbury' and to serve the king. Besides, the nation generally had been glutted with rebellion, and was sick of blood; and even those who longed for change, and who lived by depression and misrule, had arrived pretty much at the conclusion which George Gascoigne states in these words:

> And yet the drudge that delveth in the grounde,
> The poorest peasant and the homeliest hinde,
> The meanest man that ever yet was founde,
> To get a gaine by any trade or kinde,
> Lives more at reste and hath more ease of minde,
> More sure to winne, much lesser dreade to leese,
> Than any page that lives by Mars his fees.

Meanwhile, as Sir Walter Scott said in writing of this very time: 'Years rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending; and we seem ourselves to witness their flight without a sense that we are changed; and yet time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.' And so the hurricane of rebellion which swept so ruinously and disastrously over the nation—felt even by my Talking Friend, the Oak, the monarch of his place—has past away, and there is a talk from Coleham to Caux Castle of bringing the king back again.

The first intimation of it that was divulged in the valley was by an old London merchant, who was connected, as was usually the case in these and earlier days, with the woollen trade of Wales, and was tarrying at the old homestead at Meole. He it was who told old Andrew Warter what the people in London were talking of in the Chepe. My Talking Friend perfectly well recollects his visit, because he had brought with him as a present to his host a packet of a new China drink called TEA, or TAYE, which had very lately been introduced, and he heard old Andrew say that 'he did not like it at all, and that a cup of good Shropshire October ale was worth all that had ever grown, or ever would grow.' The present, however, of the good old merchant was no mean one, for it may be called to mind that in the year 1664—only four years later than the time we are writing of—the East

India Company thought *two pounds* no unmeet present for the Queen. At the present day the consumption is by millions upon millions of pounds.

Amongst other things mentioned by the venerable merchant was the difficulty of safe custody for money in the city. The mint, owing to national disturbances, being considered no longer safe. Hence originated the banking system, in which the Guinea merchants and the goldsmiths took the lead. To which he added that, as a merchant, he hoped there would soon be an improvement in their communication with the country; as the sending of letters by special messengers was very costly and inconvenient. Of the letter-carriers, whether at this time, or before, in the days of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, he spoke very slightingly; as indeed he did of such 'DIURNALS'—or, as we should call them, 'NEWSPAPERS'—which were very irregularly circulated. 'We must improve,' he said, 'or there will be great dissatisfaction on all sides'; and by comparing now our postal system with what it was forty years back even, we may easily arrive at the inconvenience which our forefathers must have suffered.

Later in the year this worthy man had an opportunity of sending to his friend at the old homestead of Meole, both by private letters, and through the 'Perfect Diurnal,' and the 'Mercurius Politicus,' a full and detailed account of the Restoration, which, as far as I could make out from my Talking Friend, accorded entirely with the accounts of Clarendon, Pepys, and Evelyn. As he was himself an eye-witness of all that was done—just as were the two latter—his statements are the more valuable. 'On Sunday,' he wrote word to his old friend, 'the king attended the Cathedral service at Canterbury; on Monday he went to Rochester, and the next day arrived in London.' In Lord Clarendon's words, 'The nine and twentieth of May, and his birthday, he entered London; all the ways thither being so full of people and acclamations as if the whole kingdom had been gathered there.' So that his Majesty said smilingly to some about him, 'He doubted it had been his own fault he had been abroad so long; for he saw nobody that did not protest he had ever wished for his return.' The conclusion of this un-

matchable history is ominously striking when the after-life of the returned king is considered.

'By these remarkable steps, amongst others, did the merciful hand of God, in this short space of time, not only bind up and heal all those wounds, but even make the scars as undiscernible as, in respect of the deepness, was possible; which was a glorious addition to the deliverance. And, after this miraculous restoration of the Crown and the Church, and the just rights of Parliament, no nation under heaven can ever be more happy if God shall be pleased to add establishment and perpetuity to the blessings He then restored.'

To these striking words let me add those of the amiable Evelyn:—

'I stood in the Strand and beheld it, and blessed God. All this was done without one drop of blood shed, and by that very army which rebelled against him; but it was the Lord's doing, for such a restoration was never mentioned in any history, ancient or modern, since the return of the Jews from the Babylonish Captivity; nor so joyful a day, nor so bright, ever seen in any other nation; this hapning when to expect or to effect it was past all human policy.'

Pepys's views were different, and but for the Restoration he would scarcely have been a favourer of Charles II. But his account is equally truthful; and like the Indian—and such adorers in our own land, amongst whose names is to be mentioned the great name of Dryden, to say nothing of Waller—he made his obeisance to the rising sun. But so it is, and many a man would be content to say with Worcester—as Shakespeare models the words—before the Battle of Shrewsbury,

> I could be content
> To entertain the lag-end of my life
> With quiet hours.

For in every way the nation had been full of disquiet; not only by reason of war and bloodshed, and what Clarendon styles 'horrid circumstances of murder, devastation and parricide, fire and sword'; but likewise through those wild religious discussions which overturned whole households, and marred the happiness of families; and the history of these sad times shows how true is the inscription on Sir Henry

Wotton's tomb in the ante-chapel at Eton—'Hic jacet primus hujus sententiæ auctor, *Disputandi pruritus ecclesiarum scabies.*'

I will venture to close the history of the troublesome times of the rebellion with Crashaw's epitaph upon Mr. Ashton, a conformable citizen, no connection, whatever, as far as I know, of the celebrated schoolmaster of Elizabeth's days, but evidently a good and conscientious man, who in his lifetime must have lamented deeply over the bad sights he had to see. Crashaw—'Poet and saint' as Cowley calls him in his lines on his death—was a sufferer in those days of misrule, and ejected from his fellowship at Peterham for denying the Covenant. It may be recollected that he was assisted in his distresses by Cowley, and recommended to the queen Henrietta when in Paris, where he had taken refuge.

The lines above alluded to are as follows; but I have no means at hand of finding out who the Mr. Ashton was:

The modest front of this small floore,
Believe me, Reader, can say more
Than many a braver marble can,
Here lies a truly honest man!
One whose conscience was a thing
That troubled neither Church nor King;
One of those few that in this Towne
Honoured all Preachers, hence their own,
Sermons he heard, yet not so many
As left no time to practise any.
He heard them reverendly, and then
His practice preach'd them o'er again.
His *Parlour-sermons* rather were
Those to the eye, than to the eare;
His prayers took their price and strength,
Not from their loudnesse, nor their length.
He was a Protestant at home,
Nor only in despight of Rome.
He lov'd his Father, yet his zeale
Tore not off his mother's veile.
To th' Church he did allow her dresse,
True *Beauty* to true *Holinesse*,
Beauty which he loved in life, did lend
Her hand to bring him to his end.
When age and death call'd for the score,
No surfets were to reckon for.

Death tore not, therefore, but sans strife
Gently untwined his thread of life.
What remains then, but that Thou
Write these lines, Reader, on thy Brow,
And let his faire Example's light
Burn in thy Imitation bright.
So while these lines can but bequeath
A life perhaps unto his death,
His better Epitaph shall be
His Life still kept alive in Thee!

A little episode still attaches to the history of these times, connected with a greater poet than Crashaw—I mean with the immortal Milton, from whom, in Cromwell's name, several letters, dated 1655, still remain, written to Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, complaining of the persecution of the Waldenses, whom in his treatise, 'Considerations touching means to remove Hirelings out of the Church,' he calls 'those ancientest reformed churches' and 'our first reformers.' In his notorious letter in the name of Oliver the Protector to the above-named prince, he speaks of the fearful edict which drove them from their land, and hearths and homes; of which when they implored the revocation, 'a part of your army fell upon 'em, most cruelly slew several, put others in chains, and compelled the rest to fly into desert places, and to the mountains covered with snow, where some hundreds of families are reduced to such distress that 'tis greatly to be fear'd they will in a short time all miserably perish through cold and hunger.'

Whitelock, in his 'Memorials,' tells the same sad story, over which I mourned as a boy in turning over the cuts in Sir Samuel Moreland's 'History of the Valleys of Piemont' which he drew up at the suggestion of Archbishop Usher.

Under May 2, 1655, this honest chronicler writes:—'Letters on the Duke of Savoy's cruel persecuting the Protestants in Piemont, by taking away their goods and estates, and putting them in prison, and carrying away of their children, using all means with violence to make them forsake their religion and the purity of the Gospel; which when they could not do, the priests persuaded the duke to send an army against them to force them to conformity, who sent 8,000 men against these poor quiet people and loyal subjects; the army fell upon

them, slew many of them with small loss, and took many prisoners, whom they used with all cruelty, and then put them to death. Others of them, with their wives and children, fled unto the mountains, whilst the soldiers plundered their houses and then fired them and their churches.' Again, under September, he tells us: 'The Protector appointed a solemn day of humiliation to be kept, and a large contribution to be gathered throughout the nation for their relief, which was very well resented by the Protestants beyond seas.'

The persecution, however, still continued, and from other passages in Whitelock it is evident he took a feeling interest in their sad estate, and accordingly 'the committee for Piedmont were very careful for the poor Protestants there to send relief to them;' and first and last they received 28,241*l.* 10*s.*, as may be picked up from other sources—a very large sum in those days.

Amongst other contributions (the cause of the subject's being introduced in these pages, though in a very small way) were those of Hanwood and Pontesbury. These were made through the hands of Mr. Tallents of St. Mary's, a name well known in those days, for he was a man of considerable reputation, of great earnestness and piety, and the friend of Richard Baxter, though it cannot be said that he was a firm and consistent Churchman, by any means.

No wonder was it that the mind of Milton, who, as Secretary, had to write the letters, should have been stirred within him at such atrocities as were then reported, and have been abundantly confirmed since. It was on this occasion that his grand sonnet was written:

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway

> The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
> A hundredfold, who, having learned thy way,
> Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

Before our great religious poet wrote this sonnet he had lost his sight, and, in a literary point of view, it is remarkable that Whitelock calls him, in the only passage in which, as far as I recollect, he mentions his name, 'one Mr. Milton, a blind man.'

A word or two more may be interesting to some old Shrewsbury boy.

Perhaps before the days of Henry III. were well out, a little cloud arose in Albigia, or Alby, in Aquitaine, which, though for ages it burnt dimly, yet continued to burn and the more brightly in the days of persecution. These opponents of the papacy went by the name of the Albigenses, and it is evidently supposed that about the time of the Reformation they joined with the Vaudois, conforming more or less to the doctrines of Zwingl and Calvin, when, if they ever really maintained anything of the sort, they must have dropped their Manichean tenets. 'Those of them,' says Dr. Hook, 'who dwelt in the valleys of Piedmont in the seventeenth century were subjected by the Church of Rome to the most barbarous and inhuman persecutions, especially in the years 1655, 1656 and 1696(?). The most horrible scenes of violence and bloodshed were exhibited at this theatre of papal tyranny, and the Waldenses at last owed their existence and support to the interference of the English and Dutch governments.'

Since the timbers of these pages were laid a strikingly interesting work has been published by the Rev. William Bramley Moore, called the 'Six Sisters of the Valleys'—those valleys amid the Cottian Alps which are world-renowned, Lucerna, St. Martin, and Peronne—'the immemorial sanctuaries of the Waldensian Church.' As Wordsworth says—

> mists that brood
> O'er chasms with new fall'n obstacles bestrewn,
> Protect them, and the eternal snow that daunts
> Aliens in God's good winter from their haunts.

In Mr. Moore's third volume Milton and the Moderator Léger are introduced, and the origin of the Sonnet above quoted is

attributed to this visit. I may conclude these remarks with the earnest Moderator's words, who said to Milton that the English were indebted to them for emancipation from the Babylonian woe and the papal thraldom. The blood-hounds of Rome 'hunted down some of our ancestors, and pursued others from glen to glen, and over rock and over mountain, till they obliged them to take refuge in foreign countries. A few of these wanderers penetrated as far as Provence and Languedoc, and from them were descended the Albigenses or heretics of Albi. The province of Guienne afforded shelter to the persecuted Albigenses. Guienne was then in your posession. From an English province our doctrines found their way into England, and your Wicliffe preached nothing more than what had been advanced by the ministers of our valleys 400 years before his time.'

More than once during the period of which we have been writing, my Talking Friend alluded to a local story in which the rector of Hanwood took great interest. I have thrown the short materials together as well as I can, but it is very disjointed and unconnected. I have entitled it

EDWARD SPURSTOW OF WORCESTER AND MARY BUCKINGHAM OF HANWOOD;

or,

A STORY OF THE OLD OAK'S BELONGING TO THE DAYS OF CHARLES I. AND CHARLES II.

> Heaven doth with us as we with torches do:
> Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
> As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
> But to fine issues.
>
> MEASURE FOR MEASURE, act i. sc. 1.

'Some twenty years, perhaps, before the death of Charles I., a new sort of trade,' said my Talking Friend, 'seemed to have sprung up in the Old Town, and men and women began to wear a curious sort of *mittens*, as they were called from time immemorial on the Rea-side, being made roughly of sheepskin, and used in hedging and ditching. You and your

brothers,' he added, 'must well recollect those which good old William Overton used to wear, and on a winter's night you may have seen him repairing them as he sat on the salt-box by the kitchen fireside, with a wooden needle and sheep-thongs.'

Clearly, by '*mittens*' my Talking Friend meant gloves, and, no doubt, though gloves at weddings are some of the oldest known gifts, there was an improvement in the article at the date here alluded to. Gloves, moreover, were an ancient symbol of conveyance, and although my Talking Friend never mentioned the circumstance in my hearing, yet, when Roger de Montgomery made a vow that he would found an abbey at Shrewsbury, he confirmed his word by laying his gloves on the altar of St. Peter.

When the call for a better-shaped and a better-fashioned glove arose in Shrewsbury, it so happened that there was no 'worker' to furnish them, and they were sold, as other articles of retail were, at the leather-cutter's, for it was long after this that hosiers and haberdashers monopolised the sale.

In those days there lived on Pride-hill a well-known leather-cutter (whose trade would now comprise saddles, &c.), by name Harry Heath, not a native of Shrewsbury, but apprenticed there in his youth from Worcester. He was a most industrious and upright man in all the relations of life, and having served his time well he became a vast favourite with his old master, who had procured for him the freedom of the town, and as the shop was the general haunt of the country gentlemen when they came in, he was very generally known and liked. Not long after this his old employer died, an unmarried man, and he succeeded to the business, was patronised, and prospered in it.

When, however, this new call for 'gloves' came, in peaceable times, he was unable to meet the demand, and, as the supply came pretty much from Worcester, Kidderminster, and Woodstock, he started for the haunts of his childhood to see what he could do there; and there he met with his former playmate and schoolfellow of the Cathedral Close—Giles Spurstow by name—himself also engaged in the leather-trade, and with a large family. The eldest boy's name was

Edward, a thoughtful, diligent, but excitable youth, amiable however, and steady, who had been brought up to the new trade. Heath took to him at once, and proposed to his father that he should return with him to Shrewsbury, as an inmate of his home, and so conduct that portion of his business.

All was soon arranged, the offer being a most advantageous one; and, as is often the case, because Heath took to the youth the youth took to him; and within nine days, smally accoutred enough, like Whittington or Edward Osborne, he accompanied his new master to Shrewsbury, and there, to his great delight, the sparkling Severn flowed by, in all his beauty, for him to bathe in, as he had done from his childhood at Worcester.

I could scarcely make out from my Talking Friend the period of Edward Spurstow's arrival in Shrewsbury, but it was certainly many years before the inhuman murder of Charles I., for when that dread deed was consummated, his good old master, Harry Heath, was no more, and Edward had taken his place. The only point on which they had never quite agreed was, that Heath was not altogether a favourer of the martyred king; but, probably, like Whitelock and many others, he shuddered at that sad and melancholy catastrophe.

It was during Edward Spurstow's residence in Shrewsbury, that the valley of the Rea was his constant holiday resort, and Hanwood, that then most lovely village, uncontaminated by the smoke of the manufactory or the locomotive, the place he loved beyond all others. Not far from it, but situate in the parish of Pontesbury, is the old 'Môt-Hall,' where, in days gone by, the Saxon swains met in council on their own account, and afterwards on compulsion by the Normans; and here it was that Edward met with the daughter of Eddert (the local name for Edward) Buckingham, who lived in a small cottage near the brook, somewhere about where Humphrey Littlehales did when I was a boy. Those who then lived in the Môt-Hall (I think the name of the family was Berrington, and if so, it is somewhat remarkable, as the Berringtons were Roman Catholics) had all their supplies from Shrewsbury, and Spurstow was their general purveyor, and

not merely in matters in his own line; for, as was often the case in those days, when the trade-guilds contained the names of the *cadets* of a family, the well-to-do and the well-mannered tradesman from the town was no unacceptable visitor. He not unfrequently came on a Saturday evening, brought the news, and had a hearty welcome in return.

It was in this family, Roman Catholic or not, that Mary Buckingham lived, and had lived several years, and was so much valued as to be rather a friend than a domestic. And there she lived on, honoured and respected, from year to year, and from year to year Edward Spurstow was a constant visitor at the old Môt-Hall. As for Mary, for her station, she was quick, and almost accomplished, and the visitors at the house took the greatest interest in her pursuits when her household occupations were over, and marvelled at her intellectual progress. And as my Talking Friend rambled on in her praise I bethought me of a modern poet's words:—

> She lov'd
> All flow'rets that with rich embroidery fair
> Enamel the green earth, the odorous thyme,
> Wild rose, and roving eglantine, nor spar'd
> To mourn their fading forms with childish tears;
> Grey birch and aspen light she lov'd, that droop
> Fringing the crystal stream; the sportive breeze
> That wanton'd with her brown and glossy locks,
> The sunbeam chequering the fresh bank.

After a time it was quite clear to the Berrington family that if the worthy tradesman was acceptable to themselves, he was equally so to their friend and domestic, for, whenever he came from Shrewsbury, as he did every month at least, with mixed supplies, and stopping over the Sunday, Mary was never forgotten, and by degrees it was observed that she always had her gloves of the neatest and the newest cut (without guards, however, so as to be quite unobtrusive, and so clearly distinguished from that of her mistress), and altogether in good taste; and so it was when she accompanied the lady of the household, as was her custom, on her visits to her neighbours, who held her in the greatest respect, as well they might, from the Môt-Hall to the Ottleys at Pitchford, and all round about;

for she took an interest in all the cottagers' children, and used to collect them in her father's cottage and teach them; introducing, as it were, the old Saxon custom afresh, and quite antedating our modern Sunday and day schools.

My Talking Friend informed me that he had heard the rector of Hanwood say—it was on a very hot midsummer's day beneath his boughs—that her teaching was of the simplest kind possible, and, as she had very few books, it was mostly from the Psalms and the Gospels. Portions of them she read to the children, verse by verse, and then they, in turn (like as in the old antiphonal service) took the book, and read them over to her. And so it went on for some time, till at length Edward Spurstow provided her with some small Bibles, of which at that time there were many to be procured in London, These were a great help, and to them it is probable that Fuller alludes in his 'Church History':

'Many impressions of English Bibles printed at Amsterdam, and more at Edinburgh in Scotland, were daily brought over hither, and sold here. Little their volumes, and low their prices, as being of bad paper, worse print, little margent, yet greater than the care of the corrector, many most abominable errata being passed therein. Take one instance for all:—Jer. iv. 17, speaking of the whole commonwealth of Judah, instead of *because she hath been* rebellious *against me, saith the Lord*, it is printed—Edinburgh, 1637—*because she hath been* religious *against me, saith the Lord.* Many complaints were made, especially by the Company of Stationers, against these false printed Bibles, as giving great advantage to the Papists, but nothing was therein effected.'

But, with whatever errors, which she would readily correct, these Bibles served her turn, and did the children good service; and it is again remarkable that the Berringtons, even if they were Roman Catholics, always furthered her good works. Seeing that the people wanted teaching, they encouraged her teaching.

(A PARENTHESIS.)

The historians of Shrewsbury give an instance of that true catholic spirit, which, without relaxing in attachment to one's own principles, can allow for those of others.

'Such was, in this instance, Mr. Bryan'—the well-known minister of St. Chad's, whose character may be seen in Calamy—and such was that Irish priest who, when the English envoy lay, as supposed, upon his death-bed in Spain, lamented that he had no spiritual assistant of his own Church to resort to. 'He did not mean to obtrude his own forms, but tendered me his services according to my own; and was ready, if I would furnish him with my prayer-book, and allow him to secure the doors from any that might overhear to the peril of his life, and administer the Sacrament to me exactly as it is ordained by our own Church; requesting only that I would reach the cup with my own hand.'—'Memoirs of R. Cumberland, Esq.,' ii. 71. Examples like this refresh the mind, weary of controversial bigotry, and may call forth our applause without at all diminishing our regret for the unreasonable scruples of the one and the superstitious trifling of the other. (See ibid. ii. 216.)

A parallel instance is given in a note of the same work (vol. ii. 382), connected with the well-known Mr. Tallents, whose pupil, Mr. Theophilus Borcaison, died at Zabin, near Strasburg, and was buried in the Roman Catholic ground.

Such, probably, was good old Monsieur Grammain, of West Grinstead, who, in the sad times of the French Revolution, lived on the best terms with my dear old friend the late Rev. William Woodward, and taught his niece, Miss Syms—my long-tried friend—to speak French as she does.

Grammain, of course, is only a *nom de guerre*, but he always retained it. The old Roman Catholic establishment there was connected with the Caryls, and the reader will call to mind the letters of Pope, dated West Grinstead Park.

'Yesterday evening he walked in and startled me by a "Salám aleykee" addressed to me; he had evidently been thinking it over, whether he ought to say it to me, and came to the conclusion that it was not wrong. "Surely it is well for all the creatures of God to speak peace (*salám*) to each other," said he. Now no uneducated Moslem would have arrived at such a conclusion. Omar would pray, work, lie, do anything for me, sacrifice money even, but I doubt whether he could utter "Salám aleykum" to any but a Moslem. I

answered as I felt: "Peace to my brother, and God keep thee!" It was almost as if a Catholic priest had felt impelled by charity to offer the Communion to a heretic.'—Lady Duff Gordon's 'Letters from Egypt,' p. 206.

Meanwhile the bloody surge of those sad battles and parricidal fights of the Great Rebellion was rolling to and fro throughout the kingdom, and bursting here and bursting there, with its reeking, crimson crest. Whatever side men took, all was excitement, and when the shadows of night fell, and the watch-fires were not far off, thoughtful men would say something of this sort of what was once 'merry England':

> It was a sad and stricken place; though day
> Was in the heaven, and the fresh grass looked green,
> The light was withered, nor was silence there
> A soothing quiet; busy 'twas, and alive,
> And piercing, rather a breeze of stormy sound
> Than stillness, like the shivering interval
> Between the pauses of a passing bell!

It was said before that Edward Spurstow was a youth thoughtful and excitable, though steady and prudent, and during the whole of this time his mind was in a ferment. Once a year, at least, he visited his family at Worcester. He had seen the Royalist forces in Pitchford meadow with the Princes Rupert and Maurice and Sir John Byrom; he had seen the gallows in the market-place, erected there to hang any who had betrayed Colonel Fiennes's soldiers to Prince Rupert; and his blood boiled within him when he saw the Parliamentary soldiers lodged within the cathedral, defiling that holy place with unloyalty to God and the king.

He was at Worcester again after the capitulation of 1646, and grievously deplored the necessity which compelled his townsmen to submit—for all his family, though in trade and humble life, were thoroughgoing loyalists.

It was between the latter event and the Battle of Worcester, evidently, that Edward became so deeply attached to Mary Buckingham. Latterly he confided to her all his thoughts, and his great restlessness, and she was more than half inclined to think that he would leave his business for a time and join

the Royal standard. Nor were her suspicions without a cause, for previous to the opening of the gates of Worcester in 1651 to Charles II. at the head of the Scottish army, he had, out of his own resources, sent saddles and bridles for the prince himself, and for the horses of his staff, and he thought a good stand might have been made then. Indeed, what Lord Clarendon says of the position was exactly what Edward Spurstow thought.

Nor did he only think so, for, having communicated all his views to Mary, he had left his business in Shrewsbury under the charge of his trusty foreman—Alfred Muckleston, my Talking Friend called him—and early in August was to be found in Worcester furthering the king's cause to the best of his power. It was thus that he became a marked man in the old city, and he was constantly to be seen reconnoitering at Red Hill within a mile's distance. The Parliamentarians, indeed, thought that if anyone by his wisdom and courage could have saved the city Edward Spurstow was the man; and so, whilst they acknowledged his talents and determination, they hated him entirely and watched him narrowly.

It was in that fatal fight, September 3, 1651, that Spurstow, though a civilian and a leather-cutter, joined in the fray. His excitable temperament broke out beyond his own power of control, and wherever Charles was there was the faithful Edward close by, prepared to ward off every blow throughout the battle, which was fought with various success for som etime, but ending, as we all know, in an absolute victory for Cromwell. Spurstow helped the king rally his men and was with him to the last, when he was persuaded to withdraw himself and to save his life by flight. His escape has been before alluded to. Soon after this, and after the Duke of Hamilton had fallen into the enemy's hands, a stern voice was heard in the midst of the *mêlée* exclaiming: 'Seize on that varlet the leather-cutter of Shrewsbury!' a well-known voice, for it was Cromwell's. Better had it been for Edward Spurstow had he been driven out of the town by the enemy's horse, for Clarendon reports: 'As the victory cost the enemy little blood, so after it there was not much cruelty used to the prisoners who were taken upon the spot. But very many of those who ran away

were every day knocked on the head by the country people, and used with great barbarity. Towards the king's menial servants, whereof most were taken, there was nothing of severity; but within a few days they were all discharged and set at liberty.'

Evidently Edward Spurstow had been denounced by the Parliamentarians as a decided and determined loyalist, and it was well known, as observed before, that he did all he could for the preservation of the city in which his family dwelt. Knowing, however, as he did, all the byways and all the secret turnings of the place, he contrived for the present to escape, and let himself down at nightfall from the wall by the slopes to the Severn. That day and the next he contrived to secrete himself; but on the third he was taken by some horsemen who were scouring the country. And then his heavy troubles began, for what Clarendon says again is but too true: 'They who fled out of Worcester and were not killed, but made prisoners, and all the foot and others who were taken in the town, except some few officers and persons of quality, were driven like cattle with a guard to London, and there treated with great rigour; and many perished for want of food: and, being enclosed in little room till they should be sold to the plantations for slaves, they died of all diseases.'

It might have been thought that Cromwell, 'who, from a private and obscure birth (though of a good family), without interest or estate, alliance or friendship, could raise himself to such a height,' would have had some feeling for one who had done in a small way what he had done, and so ruined himself. But the brewer's son of Huntingdon, who came first to the House in very shabby clothes, and something on which was very like to a leathern jerkin, was swayed by others. And although he did not interfere with Edward Spurstow's family in Worcester, or with his business in Shrewsbury, he was a marked 'Malignant,' and was treated as such. Evidently he had some backfriends, as enemies were then called, amongst the Parliamentarians, and they hounded Oliver on to persecute and to banish him. The result was, that after every attempt on the part of his friends and family to save him, he was

carried off to London with a mixed multitude of other captives, and eventually shipped to Barbados, whither, after the storming of Drogheda, in 1649, Cromwell had sent others. To make the banishment the more bitter, he was sent away in company with many of those Scots who, he thought to the last, had bartered the life of Charles I.

The result of that disastrous rout at Worcester was not long in reaching the banks of the Rea. The news was brought to Hanwood by the foreman of Edward Spurstow's shop, and from that moment the fears of Mary Buckingham were roused, and she had no rest, but, almost like Rachel, refused all the comfort of her friends at the Môt-Hall, who lavished on her the love of parents.

Nor was it long before her worst fears were realised. For, one dark night early in October, and about a month after the fight, Alfred Muckleston knocked at the rectory door at Hanwood, and it was clear to the rector that he came with heavy tidings, for the crow's-feet were doubled about his eyes, and his countenance was sad ; nor could he touch a cup of ale or eat a mouthful of bread. A man of much real feeling was Alfred, and a man of high principle. For some time he sat silent and almost as one lost. At last he said that he had received a communication : first, a private token, a signet-ring ; and then, within a few days after, a letter, written on fouled and dirty paper, but unmistakably his master's handwriting, in which he said that 'all was lost, and that he was hurried away in evil company and on his way to London.' To this he only added, 'Look well to the business, and get the rector of Hanwood, or my kind friends at the homestead of Meole, to break the matter to Mary Buckingham.' And the rector took upon himself the sad task, and did it feelingly and tenderly ; and then it was that Mary, whose religious faith was firm and strong, fell back entirely on the unobtrusive kindness of the Berringtons, for it was that of good and pitiful people.

And pitie renneth sone in gentil herte.

It was a month or more before another letter was received a duplicate of which (together with a private enclosure) was sent to Mary Buckingham. The contents of it were sad.

Such influence in his favour as could be used had been tried, but in vain, and he must accompany the kilted Scots and other ruffians to the plantations in the West Indies, a banished and a homeless man!

The letter above alluded to was written from London, and the wish expressed was that his family in Worcester should join with Alfred Muckleston in the management of the business, in case of his return, and that an annual payment, according to profits, should be made to Mary Buckingham. Such was the last letter from England, and the Spurstows and the Mucklestons were left undisturbed in Worcester and Shrewsbury, and prospered as leather-cutters and saddlers, and as glovers also.

And what were the consequences to the desolate Mary Buckingham?

Well did she bear her deep sorrow; neither did she give way, as a weaker person might have done. On the contrary, beloved by all around, and chiefly and most of all by the Berringtons and the old homestead of Meole, she laboured to deserve their love by doing good to all around her. Meanwhile her chief delight was in teaching the children, as she had been used to do, and out of those very books —the small treasured Bibles—which Edward had procured for her. Indeed, when her father died, which he did soon after, the old cottage, kept by a widow woman, was the model school-house of the valley, with its wooden tallies, and its horn books, and its uncased slates from Llanymynech, from whence, at that time, all slates came. True it was 'the day of small things'; but it is ill with such as despise such small beginnings in their way. Our ragged schools, when they were first started, were, perhaps, scarcely larger than Mary Buckingham's on the Rea-side.

And a long and weary time was that during which she had to wait for further tidings, and to possess her soul in patience—nearly two years. For although every inquiry had been made, and such offers as could be made for his liberation—and sums of money even committed to the merchants of Bristowe, who chiefly traded with the plantations—all had been to no purpose. Not a syllable was heard.

At last, when hope deferred was waning and almost dying out, except in Mary's faithful breast, a letter was brought from Bristol, as we now spell it, by the hand of one of the old float or barge owners of the Severn, who traded with Gloucester and Worcester, having a connection at Shrewsbury on the Quay, just where it stands at the present day. The letter, however, was sad as sad might be, though full of the tenderest affection. It told, in the simplest language of Christian thankfulness, that, comparatively, he had not been ill-treated, but had fallen into rather hard hands. At the same time he could give no hope of returning; to which it was added that from hardships undergone before he sailed and greater hardships on the passage out, his life was burning dim; but that he was happy in his steadfast hope in Christ his Saviour, whose Name he strove to make known on the estate where he resided.

Contained in this letter was one for the old home in Shrewsbury, and an entire resignation of the business into the hands of Alfred Muckleston, in whom he placed the most unreserved confidence. He was to make arrangements with his family in Worcester, and to do all that he could for Mary Buckingham. 'And,' said my Talking Friend, 'he did his duty faithfully, and deserved all the trust that had been placed in him; and if Mary ever could have given her affections to another it would have been to Alfred Muckleston, who clung to her as one dearer than a brother, trying to supply the place of her lost Edward.'

About a year after the last communication Mary received through a friendly planter the sad tidings of his death; but they were brightened by the planter's saying that he had brought life to him and to his household; and that she should hear of him whenever he had an opportunity. He added, also, that within a time she would receive a large trunk, containing such things as were thought worth remitting. All came within the year; and year after year there came to the old warehouse on Mardol Quay, at Shrewsbury—directed to Mary Buckingham, Hanwood, Salop—a huge parcel containing all the good things of the plantation which the gratitude of a Barbados planter and his wife could think of. I wish I

could have recorded his name, but my Talking Friend never heard it. He only said 'that his heart must have been HEART OF OAK, and as for his memory, it was as sweet as those lengths of sugar-cane which Mary used to distribute amongst the children.'

In the last letter he wrote to Mary Buckingham he applied to himself those words of the Prophet Jeremiah, adding, however, that he looked upward for the better land :— *He shall not return thither any more. But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.* This was the passage he wished her to turn to in the little Bibles so often mentioned, and to let the children read it, whilst she impressed on them the wickedness of Shallum, the son of Josiah. Besides these, there were often words of affection added also, as the rector of Hanwood reported it. After his signature there were the last words of Edward, feebly traced, but all in large capitals :—

FOR TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN.

Constant remittances had been sent to him, but there was the Oliver and Barebones ill-omened cross against his name ; and he was never allowed to return. He seems to have died about two years before the return of Charles II. ; and many inquiries were instituted about him by Richard Ottley of Pitchford, who went to salute the king, with such thorough joy of heart, on his arrival at Dover.

Little remains to be added about Mary Buckingham. Deep as was her sorrow, she bore it like a Christian woman, still teaching the children at Hanwood and beloved by all, especially by the rector of Hanwood, and by the inhabitants of the old homestead at Meole ; but specially by the children of Alfred Mucklestone, who, with his wife, was her constant friend. Nor did she leave the home of the Berringtons at Môt-Hall till the elders of the family passed away. When her mistress died, to whom she had been as a daughter, she then retired, with the blessings of the family on her head, to her father's cottage, so often mentioned ; where, my Talking Friend said, she lived quite till the days of William and Mary, and might have seen those old pictures of them still

remaining at Meole. Long after her death her name remained as a household word amongst the people of Hanwood; and pleasing it is to remember that when riches, and power, and worldly honour, and pride of place, and pomp, and pageantry, with nodding plumes and horses, pass off this human stage as a dream when one awaketh, RIGHTEOUSNESS IS IMMORTAL.

I had nearly omitted to add—and a grave omission it would have been—that in the last package Mary received from the worthy old planter in the West Indies, there was a curious piece of workmanship, wrought by the Carib women with fishbones as white as ivory, and inlaid with grass as fine as the gossamer. It was a representation of Edward Spurstow's tomb.

The palms he loved, so slow of growth, were rising by it, and the fireflies he loved like the palms were fitfully playing round them, his favourite light. Hard by them was a little rill of water, taught to run there, and called by the negro women THE REA WATER, the name of the dear old brook at Hanwood. Nothing, since her irremediable loss, ever gave Mary Buckingham so much pleasure.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE MERRY MONARCH.

'Cœpisti melius quam desinis. Ultima primis
Cedunt: dissimiles hic vir et ille puer.'
OVID, *Heroid. Epist.* ix. 23.

Hyde answered, that he thought the king had so true a judgment, and so much good nature, that when the age of pleasure should be over, and the idleness of his exile, which made him seek new diversions for want of other employment, was turned to an obligation to mind affairs, then he would have shaken off the entanglements.—BISHOP BURNET'S *Summary*, Book I. p. iii. ed. 8vo, 1815.

Here lies our sovereign lord the king,
Whose word no man relies on;
Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one.
COURT EPIGRAM.

THE letter of Charles I. to his son, when in the hands of his enemies, is one not readily forgotten by any reader of these times; and Southey, with his ripe wisdom and penetration, commences his eighteenth chapter of the 'Book of the Church' with it: that Book which, beyond any other, is still *the Book* which should command the attention of all real Churchmen. Not impossibly—for what has been will be again—times in some way not dissimilar, may be cropping forth, and unless the wisdom of experience is to be thrown to the winds, the wisdom of history is not to be disregarded. Had Charles II. not fallen, as he did, into the slough of indolence, and consequent dissoluteness, he might have profited well by what his father wrote, and the nation at large would have been saved from many troubles. But trouble and exile had not wrought upon the second Charles as it ought to have done, and hence the sad results—*hinc illæ lacrymæ!* Nothing

can be more sad than to read the melancholy accounts in Evelyn and Burnet; Pepys even could not but be dismayed at what he saw and heard.

> Who comes—with rapture greeted, and caress'd
> With frantic love—his kingdom to regain.
> Him Virtue's Nurse, Adversity, in vain
> Received, and fostered in her iron breast;
> For all she taught of hardiest and of best,
> Or would have taught, by discipline of pain
> And long privation, now dissolves amain
> Or is remembered only to give zest
> To wantonness.

But I must now pass on to something concerning the Old Oak's locality.

It was reported at once in the valley of the Rea that on the Restoration the aldermen in the Old Town took their old places once more. On this occasion, as is usual in Shropshire, there were feast and festival, or, as the people spoke, 'great doings,' and many from Pontesbury, Meole, and Hanwood, went to the gala sight.

About this time the Old Oak told how that wild preacher Vavasor Powel passed by on his way to preach in North Wales, 'against all magistracy and ministry,' and very few of that cast and sort of people ever made a greater commotion than he did from Montgomery to Salop. The Welshmen, in their blue thick coats, and with their little ponies, and panniers full of mussels, which they then hawked about as they did when I was a boy, were loud in his praise. Taffy, indeed, has been at all times easily influenced by mob oratory, hedge-preaching, and ranting.

As the Old Oak said so much of him he must be mentioned here.

It appears that he was thrown into prison in Shrewsbury before he was committed to the Fleet, which was subsequent to August 1660. As he used to say, not without boasting, that he was once a member of Jesus College, Oxford, Antony à Wood gives, in many ways, an interesting account of him in the 'Athenæ Oxonienses.' Many people, said my Talking Friend, called him the Apostle of the Cymry, and there can be no doubt that, however wild and fanatical, he was

a very powerful preacher, and a man of courage, too, for he charged Cromwell to his face with aspiring to absolute power. On one occasion the Old Oak heard a Welshman say, in conversation with Thomas Rowbotham of Meole, that horns of light proceeded from his head when he preached; which concurs with what Martin Llewellin, of Christ Church, said of him that 'when he preached a mist or smoak would issue from his head, so great an agitation of spirit he had, and therefore 'twas usually reported by some, especially those that favoured him, that he represented the saints of old time, that had rays painted about their heads.' What Wood himself says of him, in his prejudiced way, is this: 'He was a person of good natural parts, but a grand schismatic, a busybody, pragmatical, bold, and an indefatigable enemy to monarchy and episcopacy. What his religion was I cannot justly tell you; some held him to be an Anabaptist, others a Fifth-Monarchy man, and a Millenary; sure it is he was neither Presbyterian nor Independent, but a most dangerous and pestilent man, and one that did more mischief to his native country of Wales than can be imagined.'

Very different, however, was the way in which the Welsh themselves talked of Vavasor Powel, as has been already mentioned, and a very different summary of his life and character is given by his friend, E. Bagshaw, who had this epitaph engraven on the plank of an altar monument of freestone, which was soon after erected to his memory 'at the lower or west end of the fanatical burial-place near to Bunhill, and the new artillery garden in the suburb of London.' It runs thus: 'VAVASOR POWELL, a successful teacher of the past, a sincere witness of the present, and an useful example to the future age, lies here interred, who, in the defection of so many, obtained mercy to be buried faithful; for which being called to several persons, he was then tried, and would not accept deliverance, expecting a better resurrection. In hope of which he finished this life and testimony together, in the eleventh year of his imprisonment, and in the 53rd year of his age. Octob. 27, an. 1671.

In vain oppressors do themselves perplex,
To find out arts how they the saints may vex,

> Death spoils their plot, and sets the oppressed free,
> Thus Vavasor obtained true liberty,
> Christ him releas'd, and now he's joyn'd among
> The martyr'd souls, with whom he cries—How long?
> REV. vi. 10.'

As the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury had little in common with Vavasor Powel, so, too, apparently had my Talking Friend. Indeed, I may mention in passing that he did not much like the name of Vavasor, though borne by a rich Yorkshire family with whom his friends at the old homestead of Meole were connected, through their Yorkshire blood of Walter there. The truth is—for, like his time-honoured father he was somewhat prejudiced—he looked upon the name as Norman, and he never liked the Normans, as he did the Cymry and even the Saxons. Indeed, he would have used at any time the lines in St. Clement's Eve:

> Ne'er did I see in church, or camp, or court,
> I will not say men like them (for in my time
> I have seen visages as villainous
> As any Normandy can send to scare us);
> But men of visage more detestable
> I ne'er saw yet—more cruel-eyed, or men
> Whose outside of their inside told a tale
> More foul and loathsome. On the brow of each
> Writ by kind Providence that watcheth o'er us
> I read the word, 'Beware!'

So prejudiced was my gnarled and storm-twisted Old Friend, whose rugged bark was a spectacle to all passers-by, covering, nevertheless, a Heart of Oak. And one he was, who, on due consideration, must have admitted the truth of the lines which precede those just now quoted, for he was at all time open, as to the winds so to reason:

> Wisdom errs
> In nought more oft than putting easy trust
> In tales where things are dark. For man is loth,
> In argument where grounded thought is none
> And yet the theme solicitous, to fold
> The wings of thought and drop its lids, and own
> That in a night of knowledge to roost and sleep
> Is judgment's sole sagacity. Thus, he
> That justly should have balanc'd 'twixt two weights,

Substantial both, though divers in degree
Of credibility, shall lose himself,
Intent on vacancy, in snatching shadows
And pondering of imponderable motes.

Considering the constant religious differences of the time, it might be inferred, especially after what has been said of Vavasor Powel, that my Talking Friend would have heard much, but in truth, it was not so, though both the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury more than once mentioned with satisfaction the king's declaration from Breda, for they thought it implied peace, and they had seen too much of intestine broils both in Church and State. The particular portion of it referred to was probably the following, which I copy from Clarendon : 'And because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other ; which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of condonation, will be composed or better understood : we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom ; and that we shall be ready to assent to such an Act of Parliament, as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us for the full granting that indulgence.'

As is well known, this was given under Charles's sign manual and privy signet in the month of April, just before his return. Whether he honestly adhered to it has been a question with many, but not with one who held a position in these parts, and was a sort of superintendent of the churches—the only one, in fact, with the exception of Vavasor Powel, of whom, as a theologian, my Talking Friend seemed to know much. The reader will at once anticipate the person meant, the celebrated

Richard Baxter.

It has been more than once hinted at before that Baxter seems to have exercised a sort of superintendence over the Shropshire churches, and for this reason it was thought that so many of his books were to be found, even till the commencement of the present century, in the houses in the valley

of the Rea, and even at this time of day one is almost sorry that he did not receive the bishopric offered to Calamy, and himself and Reynolds, who alone accepted it. Calamy as a determined anti-episcopalian, of course could not do so ; but Baxter was always rather the friend to moderate episcopacy. His letter to Lord Clarendon, found in his Life, is fair and reasonable ; and no wonder, as Burnet says, with reference more especially to the Savoy Conference, 'that there was great submission paid to him by the whole party.'

His conduct at this Conference hardly seems to bear out what has here been said, but his greedy eating of apples when a boy (like St. Augustine), has been before alluded to, and it left him with an excitable temperament of body. In the words of 'The Book of the Church': 'Reynolds was among the better and wiser scholars who conformed ; he accepted the see of Norwich. That of Hereford was refused by Baxter, and that of Lichfield by Calamy. How strongly the latter was attached to his party is proved by the dishonourable manner in which he attempted to promote its cause ; the stronger intellect and more ingenuous temper were clouded by old prejudices, petty scruples, and the perpetual sense of bodily infirmities, which made his protracted life little better than one long disease.' None better appreciated the goodness of Baxter than Southey. And although Churchmen cannot always accord with him, take him all for all, the world has known few better or more conscientious men. The sixth edition of 'The Poor Man's Family Book,' London, 1697 (one of those picked up in the valley), lies before me as I write these lines. It has been well thumbed, and has written in it 'Samuel Woollat, 1752.'

Bishop Short is usually a fair and just writer, and it is thus he speaks of Richard Baxter, concerning the Savoy Conference—I doubt if the people on the Rea-side would have agreed with him, but they only knew his practical works, and if he was, as Burnet says, 'subtle and metaphysical,' they knew nothing of it. To them his plain, simple, though earnest exhortations were all peace—

> Mild as the melodies at close of day,
> That hard, remote, along the vale decay !

'Baxter,' says Bishop Short, 'appears throughout the whole transaction to have given up the hope, and with it perhaps almost the wish, of reconciling the two parties. He earnestly desired peace, but it was only on his own terms, and he would concede nothing to his opponents.' With this feeling, it soon became his object, to render the dispute, in the eyes of the world, as favourable as possible to his own party, and to leave a clear testimony to posterity, that the bishops had rejected that which, in his opinion, was essential to Christianity. He readily put himself forward in the contest with the view of screening his brethren from the animosity of the bishops, and esteemed it a cause for which he could comfortably suffer, being no less disposed to become a willing martyr in the cause of charity, than he would in that of faith, had he been called to the trial. One cannot but admire the heroic temper of such a man, but we must be very cautious not to mistake all these feelings for Christianity. In this case they were doubtless mixed up with very much that was Christian; but Baxter never once thought of sacrificing in the cause of Christ, that which a good man values most highly of anything in this world, the good opinion of his own party, and the admiration of his friends: had he yielded all that in his conscience he could yield, the more violent members of his party would perhaps have counted him a traitor to their cause but the peace of the Church of England would probably have been promoted, and the service of real religion have been advanced.' Such are a fair man's opinions.

Upon inquiring if the well-known face of Baxter had ever been seen in the valley, my Talking Friend replied that he had never known him pass this way, but that Captain Hosier, of Cruckton, had often seen him in Shrewsbury. The person here alluded to was George Hosier, the son of Richard Hosier, of Cruckton. 'He appears,' say our historians, 'to have been governor of Shrewsbury Castle in 1663, 1670, and 1673, and to have dwelt there.' The Old Oak knew him well.

It was one of this family, most likely, who was much afflicted with scrofula, and who, receiving no benefit from Sutton Spa, or St. Winifred's, Holywell, or St. Mildred's at Wenlock, determined to try the king's touch, and went to

London for that purpose—though some did mischievously say he only made that an excuse for a visit to the metropolis. Whether or not, he got access to the King, and was touched for the 'healing' in the banquet house; and being an early riser he more than once saw Charles II., slipshod and in an undress, feeding his pet waterfowl in St. James's Park, a fact alluded to in Dryden's 'Panegyric on the Coronation,' and which gave much pleasure to the passers-by. Dryden's words are:

> Here the mistrustful fowl no harm suspects.

I may add that Pepys says in his Diary: 'The king do tire all his people that are about him with early rising since he comes.'

It may be mentioned in passing that on August 26, 1687, James II. touched for the evil in Shrewsbury at St. Mary's Church. The service read 'at the Healing' may be seen in the Sparrow Collections, printed in 1684; and a sufficient summary of the ancient custom (the kings of France claimed the power, and in England it dates from the time of Edward the Confessor) in Hook's 'Church Dictionary,' who concludes the article with these words: 'There seems to be little doubt that by the mere force of imagination a cure was not unfrequently occasioned.' He had previously referred to a well-known passage in Bishop Bull's 'St. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh explained,' who draws pretty much the same inference. What benefit Captain Hosier received does not appear—and we have seen the people's doubts. Why should he have cast any slur upon the virtues of Sutton Spa?

> Wise teachers will not vain receipts obtrude,
> While grievous pains pronounce the humours crude;
> Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
> Till some safe crises authorise their skill.

On my asking my Talking Friend about the concerns of Shrewsbury at this time he told me he recollected nothing particular — only disputes about the removal of one Mr. Jones, as town clerk, and the temporary appointment of Adam Ottley, Esq., the son of the late governor. In this the rector of Hanwood took some interest, as there was a

friendly connection always between the old homestead at Meole on the Rea-side, and the black-and-white house at Pitchford—a name given in former days to the curious timber edifices of the time. But perhaps, indeed, about this date the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury were more concerned in what related to themselves, for it appears that after the year 1661 the clergy paid no more 'subsidies,' as they were called, and on the whole it was considered to be a wise and satisfactory arrangement. 'Henceforward,' in the words of Burnet, 'it was resolved on to tax church benefices as temporal estates were taxed, which proved, indeed, a lighter burden, but was not so honourable as when it was given by themselves. Yet, interests prevailing above the point of honour, they acquiesced in it. So the convocations being no more necessary to the Crown, this meant that there was less regard made to them afterwards. They were often discontinued and prorogued, and when they met it was only for form.'

In the year 1662, as I picked up from my Talking Friend, the beautiful steeple of St. Mary's in Shrewsbury was repaired, and the dwellers on the Rea-side took a great interest in the work. Those who went from Hanwood to Shrewsbury, from one part of the road could see the scaffolding and, as they said, the men, like emmets, upon it. Whether this was so or not I cannot say, but in other respects the memory of the Old Tree was good, for the memorandum following occurs in St. Mary's accounts:

'1662. Memorandum, that this year the steeple of St. Mary's church being much out of repair, was taken down 6 yards from the top, and repayred by Nath[l] Syms of Lecester borough, who did itt by goinge upon the outside of the steeple by ladders, and tooke downe the cocke, which was also this year new gilded, and the scaffold was made on the outside above the upper piles, about 8 yards from the top. The whole charge to the mason and carpenter findinge all necessarys was *72l.* 10.'

One matter there was, at this time, which made a talk in the old town, which was the New Charter—never acted upon, never having passed the Great Seal. The fact is, it was but a new modelling of the municipal body confirming

previous ones; the king meanwhile reserving to himself 'all that our Castle of Salop, and all ditches, fosses, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, with their and each of their appurtenances, to Us lately surrendered.' But this point was rather discussed by the Hosiers at Cruckton than by the people of the Oak in general. In truth, because it deprived them of their annual amusements, they were much more concerned when news was brought that the Maypoles in Shrewsbury were taken down to make fire ladders with. An odd expedient, certainly.

One day—it was lovely autumn weather—and as the Old Oak's boughs responded to the wind, making an untimely music, and his leaves rustled as they fell, he asked me who John Milton and Salmasius were. And he added that once upon a time, in the reign of Charles I., two strangers held a very angry discussion beneath his shade about them. His idea was that those wayfarers must have been deans or archdeacons, for they were very portly, and wore great ugly hats, and spoke of Pontesbury, Meole, Cruckton, and Hanwood as very out-of-the-way places. I was amused at the question, as was natural, and then told him what a name the great religious poet had left behind him, and how I constantly read his poems, as I read Chaucer, and Spenser, and Shakespeare. And upon this I repeated to him the lines in Wordsworth's sonnet, and he said they were musical as the waters of the Rea.

Meanwhile a sad and heavy visitation was settling down on the metropolis of the land, and Death was the great reaper, and it fell, to use the words of Otway,

Like baleful dew from a distempered sky,

baffling all the physical powers of man, and, in truth, the powers of physic also, as in the great plagues described by Thucydides, or by Lucretius, when

Mussabat tacito Medicina timore.

From accidental circumstances it excited a great commotion in the valley, for one of the inhabitants of Hanwood, Ellen Humphreys by name, beloved of all who knew her, died of it in London. For some time it was not known even

to her parents—who possibly may have lived by the bridge-side, where old Humphrey the wheelwright lived when I was a boy. Whether or not, when the news came she had been buried some time, and all the people mourned her loss, even to the children who played in the shallows—so sweet a flower was Ellen, so tender, and so good!

> No beauteous blossom of the fragrant spring,
> Though the fair child of Nature newly born,
> Could be so lovely!

Under the circumstances it was natural that all information would be much and often discussed, and so my Talking Friend told me that he heard it constantly spoken of by all comers and goers—quite as much so, indeed, as the accounts of the Great Fire in the year following, which, as will be seen, excited a great interest also on the Rea-side, and, like the calamity of the plague, from local circumstances.

Although it had been raging in London since May, 1665, it was not till later in the year that an alarm was raised in Shrewsbury, when the following order of the Corporation was issued—thus printed by our historians: '18th Sep. 1665. Agg. yt ye alderm^n and assists shall, durg such tyme as ye City of London shall remayne infected wh the plague, 3 of them day & night take upon them the chardge of the wardes and watches and at each gate—and to give an oath to all strangers to declare from what part they come. . . .'

So much interest being taken in the valley in relation to the plague, some details must be given of it here, collected, of course, from the pages of Evelyn, Pepys, and Lord Clarendon, with which De Foe's 'Journal of the Plague Year' will be found to agree closely enough, and is certainly no fiction. That remarkable narrative, published in 1722, was reprinted in the 'Family Library Notes,' and is easily accessible. De Foe, it is likely, used MS. diaries of his own family, or others entrusted to him. It is thought that the concluding initials, H. F., mean H. Foe, and that the lines which precede them speak of him as an actual survivor:

> A dreadful plague in London was,
> In the year sixty-five,
> Which swept a hundred thousand souls
> Away—yet I alive.

The original name of this celebrated writer was Foe, not De Foe, which is worth noting.

Pepys writes under October 19 and 30, 1663, that 'the plague is got to Amsterdam, brought by a sloop from Argier, and it is also carried to Hambrough.' 'The plague is much in Amsterdam, and we in fear of it here, which God defend.' They were what might be called the first mutterings of the coming storm, which broke out in London, May, 1665. It is under the 24th of this month that the following entry occurs in Pepys: 'At the coffee-house, where all the news of the Dutch being gone out, and of the plague growing upon us in this town; and of remedies against it, some saying one thing and some another.' On June 7 the evil was nearer: 'The hottest day I ever felt in my life. This day, much against my wish, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses markt with a red cross upon the doors, and "Lord, have mercy upon us!" writ there, which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that to my remembrance I ever saw.' Up to this time it was *out* of the city, but on June 10 he hears that the plague has come *into* the city.

Perhaps the saddest reference in Pepys is under August 31: 'Thus this month ends with great sadness upon the publick, through the greatness of the plague everywhere throughout the kingdom almost. Every day sadder and sadder news of its increase. In the city died this week 7,496, and of them 6,102 of the plague. But it is feared that the true number of the dead this week is near 10,000; partly from the poor that cannot be taken notice of, through the greatness of their number, and partly from the Quakers and others that will not have any bell ring for them;' and, as late as September 20, he tells us there were 'no boats upon the River; and grass grows all up and down White Hall court, and nobody but poor wretches in the streets.' It was not till November that the plague began sensibly to decrease, noted by Evelyn under the 23rd, and by Pepys under the 15th. Under the 30th of the same month, he records how his father wrote how that he 'saw York's waggon go again to London this week, and full of passengers.'

As is well known, this awful scourge lingered about for

long, and although Evelyn says, in his Diary, under the dates of January 12 and February 6, in the year following—that is, in 1666—that it was not 'wholly extinguished,' but 'universally ceasing,' yet Pepys, under August 6 and 7, speaks of fresh cases, and, as late as the 7th and the 13th of September, they give similar accounts. It is on October 30 that Evelyn says it had abated considerably. After that all alarm seems to have ceased, though it did not quite die out till 1679, the last year in which it is mentioned in the Bills of Mortality. It was at the end of the year 1665, or the beginning of 1666, that a *London Gazette* was first seen in Shrewsbury, by the rector of Hanwood, in which he read many particulars. It was first published in Oxford, November 7, 1665.

If to the above be added the statements of Lord Clarendon, the reader will have a very fair account, in little, of the plague in which Ellen Humphreys of Hanwood died.

'After Christmas, 1666,' he says, 'the rage and fury of the pestilence began in some degree to be mitigated, but so little that nobody who had left the town had yet the courage to return thither; nor had they reason, for though it was a considerable abatement from the height it had been at, yet there died still between three and four thousand in the week, and of those some men of better condition than had fallen before.'

My Talking Friend told me one day that it was in the year after the plague that a furious storm raged all over the kingdom, and shook the valley of the Rea from one end to the other. 'Luckily,' he added, 'it was in the winter; for had it been in the summer, when our boughs were heavy with leaves, there is no saying what damage it would have caused.' And I thought of the lines in the 'Annus Mirabilis,' which I was naturally reading, with the plague and the fire in my thoughts:

> All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,
> He stands, and sees below his scattered leaves.

My Old Friend's memory served him well, for, on turning to Pepys, under January 23, 1666, I find: 'A most furious storm all night and morning.'

It was hinted at before that the Great Fire of London was also a matter much canvassed in our valley. And the

reason of it was this: Murdoch Davies, who, for half a century afterwards, lived in the suburb of Frankwell, Shrewsbury, was at this time engaged in a large house of business as a clerk in London. His first cousin, Richard Davies, a clever, intelligent person, though in humble life, and withal a great musician and the minstrel of the neighbourhood, had, in those days, a house by the brookside at Meole, and if there was a good trout or a pike to be taken out of it he was the man to secure the prey. Between him and his cousin Murdoch there was a great attachment, and to him it was, when the fire had burned itself out, that the latter sent the account of it—partly by letter, partly by one of the papers which then first began to be distributed, and which was put into his hands by Owen Owen, a flannel merchant's correspondent in Shrewsbury. All this news was, of course, communicated by Richard Davies to the indwellers of the old homestead; and the consequence was that, on Sunday especially, which from time immemorial has always been the countryman's great news day, it was a subject of constant conversation beneath the shade of my Talking Friend. No doubt Murdoch Davies's account—for he was a Welshman—must have been a graphic one –

Pluris est oculatus testis unus, quam auriti decem—

and these eye-witnesses we have to this day, in the Diaries of Pepys and Evelyn, and in the ever-memorable pages of the great Lord Clarendon's Autobiography. Dryden, in his 'Letter to Sir Robert Howard,' speaks of the fire as being 'so swift, so sudden, so vast and miserable, as nothing can parallel in story.' Such was the narrative of Murdoch also, who told his cousin Richard that it began in a baker's shop, and the reader will find what he said corroborated in the pages above alluded to.

The lieutenant of the Tower told Pepys that it began on the morning of September 2 in the king's baker's house (whose name appears to have been Faryner), in Pudding Lane; or, as Evelyn puts it, 'This fatal night, about ten, began the deplorable fire neere Fishe streete, in London.' In Dryden's memorable lines—

Then in some close pent room it crept along,
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed ;
Till th' infant monster, with devouring strong,
Walked boldly upright with exalted head.

To the above, corroborating Murdoch Davies's and Pepys's narratives, must be added that of Lord Clarendon : 'It was upon the first day of that September, in the dismal year of 1666 (in which many prodigies were expected, and so many really fell out) that the memorable and terrible fire broke out in London, which began about midnight, or nearer the morning of Sunday, in a baker's house at the end of Thames Street, next the Tower, there being many little narrow alleys and very poor houses about the place where it first appeared ; and then, finding such store of combustible materials as that street is always furnished with in timber houses, the fire prevailed so powerfully that the whole street and the neighbourhood was in so short a time turned to ashes that few persons had time to save and preserve any of their goods ; but were a heap of people almost as dead with the sudden distraction as with the shock which they sustained.'

Meanwhile, people, in their great alarm, were laying the crime of the fire to the Dutch and the French and the Roman Catholics, and even to a servant of the Portuguese ambassador, instead of labouring to get it under. Of many, indeed, it might have been said, as of the doves observed by Pepys : 'Among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their homes, but hovered about the windows and balconys, till they burned their wings and fell down.' One can see them falling ! Indeed, on more than one occasion, old Pepys showed more heart than he was usually thought to possess, when he tells us of 'a most horrid, malicious, bloody flame, not like the free flame of any ordinary fire' ; adding, 'We staid till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side of the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long. It made me weep to see it !'

It continued burning till the 6th, and what was the loss of life was never known, though probably by no means so great as might have been anticipated. Dryden's lines, if not

too literally understood, will express the time of the conflagration:

> And now four days the sun had seen our woes,
> Four nights the moon beheld th' incessant fire;
> It seemed as if the stars more sickly rose,
> And further from the feverish north retire.

The several details given by Pepys and Evelyn are most touching, and to them I must refer the reader—both of them, as I said, eye-witnesses of the terrible calamity. It was on the 7th that both of them made their sad survey, and Pepys tells us how he saw 'all the towne burned, and a miserable sight of Paul's Church, with all the roofs fallen, and the body of the quire fallen into St. Fayth's; Paul's School also, Ludgate and Fleet Street. My father's house, and the church, and a good part of the Temple the like.' And then he, who, when all was well, was so vain of his showy dress, went to a friend, 'and borrowed a shirt of him, and washed.' This same day the tender Evelyn took his rounds, and saw the same melancholy sight: 'The goodly Church of St. Paul's a sad ruin;' the people walking about the ruins 'like men in some dismal desert, or, rather, in some greate city laid waste by a cruel enemy.' Then, presently, he goes 'towards Islington and Highgate, where one might have seen 200,000 people, of all ranks and degrees, dispersed and lying along by the heaps of what they could save from the fire, deploring their losse, and, tho' ready to perish for hunger and destitution, yet not asking a penny for reliefe, which to me appeared a stranger sight than any I had yet beheld.' But, as we shall see by-and-by, all care was taken to mitigate the present distress.

But, however interesting the details of Pepys and Evelyn, Lord Clarendon's continuous narrative sets the calamity most clearly and simply before us.

'The fire and the wind,' he tells us, 'continued in the same excess all Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday till afternoon, and flung and scattered brands into all quarters: the nights more terrible than the days, and the light the same, the light of the fire supplying that of the sun. And, indeed, whoever was an eye-witness of that terrible prospect, can

never have so lively an image of the last conflagration till he beholds it; the faces of all people in a wonderful dejection and discomposure, not knowing where they could repose themselves for one hour's sleep, and no distance thought secure from the fire, which suddenly started up before it was suspected; so that people left their homes and carried away their goods from many places which received no hurt, and whither they afterwards returned again; all the fields full of women and children, who had made a shift to bring thither some goods and conveniences to rest upon, as safer than any houses, where yet they felt such intolerable heat and drought, as if they had been in the middle of the fire. The king and the duke, who rode from one place to another, underwent as much fatigue as the meanest, and had as little sleep or rest; and the faces of all men appeared ghastly and in the highest confusion. The country sent in carts to help those miserable people who had saved any goods; and by this means, and the help of coaches, all the neighbouring villages were filled with more people than they could contain, and more goods than they could find room for; so that those fields became likewise as full as the others about London and Westminster.' Then, mentioning how brick houses seemed to check the progress for a while, he goes on to say: 'Besides the spreading, insomuch as all London seemed but one fire in the breadth of it, it seemed to continue in its full fury a direct line to the Thames side, all Cheapside from beyond the Exchange, through Fleet Street; insomuch as for that breadth, taking in both sides as far as the Thames, there was scarce a house or church standing from the bridge to Dorset house, which was burned on Tuesday night, after Baynard's Castle.' It was on Wednesday morning that the king's fears were roused for Whitehall, but more so for Westminster Abbey, and had many intervening houses pulled down, whilst others were blown up with gunpowder.

'But it pleased God, contrary to all expectation, that on Wednesday, about four or five of the clock in the afternoon, the wind fell; and as in instant the fire decreased, having burned all on the Thames-side to the new buildings of the Inner Temple, next to Whitefriars, and having consumed them, was

stopped by that vacancy from proceeding farther into that house; but laid hold on some old buildings which joined to Ram Alley, and swept all those into Fleet Street. And the other side being likewise destroyed to Fetter Lane, it advanced no further, but left the other part of Fleet Street to the Temple Bar, and all the Strand, unhurt, but what damage the owners of the houses had done to themselves by endeavouring to remove; and it ceased in all other parts of the town near the same time; so that the greatest care then was to keep good guards to watch the fire that was upon the ground, that it might not break out again.' After this Clarendon mentions what I before alluded to: 'When the night, though far from being a quiet one, had somewhat lessened the consternation, the first care the king took was that the country might speedily supply markets in all places, that they who had saved themselves from burning might not be in danger of starving; and if there had not been extraordinary care and diligence used, many would have perished that way.'

Evelyn's visit to Islington and Highgate has been alluded to above, and it is most remarkable what Clarendon says, that 'in all the fields about the town, which had seemed covered with those whose habitations were burned and with the goods which they had saved, there was scarce a man to be seen.' This, at least, shows care and thought.

When the fire was well got under, what disturbed the king most was 'the imagination which possessed the hearts of so many that all this mischief had fallen out by a real and formed conspiracy; which albeit he saw no colour to believe, he found very many of his own council who did really believe it. Whereupon he appointed a privy-council to sit both morning and evening, to examine all evidences of that kind that should be brought before them'—but to no real purpose, for nothing could be brought home. 'But,' concludes the noble historian, 'let the cause be what it would, the effect was very terrible; for above two parts of three of that great city were burned to ashes, and those the most rich and wealthy parts of the city, where the greatest warehouses and the best shops stood. The Royal Exchange, with all the streets about

it, Lombard Street, Cheapside, Paternoster Row, St. Paul's Church, and almost all the other churches in the city '—eighty-nine, it has been said—'with the Old Bailey, Ludgate, all Paul's Churchyard, even to the Thames, and the greatest part of Fleet Street, all which were places the best inhabited, were all burned, without one house remaining.' Such was this awful fire, and although we cannot entirely apply the line of Virgil, and say that the wickedness with which men's hearts were tainted was either washed or burnt out—

Infectum eluitur scelus aut exuritur igni—

yet it did inspire solemn thoughts in the minds of many, and the lurking places of the plague were searched out by the devouring flames, and the taint of it lessened.

Pepys and Evelyn tell us that October 10 was the day appointed for a general fast—'to humble us,' adds the latter, 'on y^e^ late dreadfull conflagration, added to the plague and war, the most dismall judgment that could be inflicted, but which indeede we highly deserved, for our prodigious ingratitude, burning lusts, dissolute Court, profane and abominable lives, under such dispensations of God's continued favour in restoring Church, Prince, and People from our late intestine calamities, of which we were altogether unmindfull, even to astonishment.' So spake the thoughtful Evelyn!

It was before hinted that this was a grand opportunity for the libertine Charles to pull up. And Clarendon says: 'It was hoped and expected that this prodigious and universal calamity, for the effects of it covered the whole kingdom, would have made impression, and produced some reformation in the licence of the Court; for as the pains the king had taken night and day during the fire, and the dangers he had exposed himself to, even for the saving of the citizens' goods, had been very notorious and in the mouths of all men, with good wishes and prayers for him, so his Majesty had been heard, during that time, to speak with great piety and devotion of the displeasure that God was provoked to. And no doubt the deep sense of it did raise many good thoughts and purposes in his royal breast. But,' adds the noble historian so painfully, 'he was narrowly watched and looked to, that such

melancholie thoughts might not long possess him'—and we know the results!

We think very differently now, and suppose a great opportunity to have been lost when the city was rebuilt, but at the time the new buildings were much appreciated. Even Clarendon says: 'The so sudden repair of those formidable ruins, and the giving so great a beauty to all deformity (a beauty and a lustre that the city had never before been acquainted with), is little less wonderful than the fire that consumed it;' or, to use the stilted lines of Dryden, in the 'Annus Mirabilis':

> Methinks already from this chemic flame
> I see a city of more precious mould;
> Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
> With silver paved, and all divine with gold.

Still, though it was no El Dorado, it was greatly improved, and we are always to bear in mind that, previous to the fire, most of the houses in the city were but lath and plaster; and, had it consumed all those in the Strand, it would have met with more thatched houses than we, in these days, readily imagine. The last remnant of thatch in London was 'The Thatched House Tavern,' which has been alluded to before in these pages. I knew it well, and it stood where the Conservative Club stands now.

Evelyn, that most accomplished gentleman, did what he could to forward improvements, and I bethought me of those lines in the 'Metamorphoses':

> Incendia lumen
> Præbebant; aliquisque malo fuit usus in illo.

It is under September 13 that he writes in his Diary: 'I presented his Ma^ty^ with a survey of the ruines, and a plot for a new City, with a discourse on it'; and he wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Fluke on this subject, in which the reader may not improbably think that he discovers the rudiments of the Embankment which is now attracting the attention of all Londoners. He was, however, more taken with Dr. Wren's plans than his own, and he thought that a 'more glorious phœnix' (such are his words) would never be upon earth than London, 'if it do at last emerge out of these cinders,

and as the designe is laid, with y^e^ present fervour of y^e^ undertakers.'

Seven or eight years after the time we are now speaking of, Richard Davies paid a visit to his kinsman Murdoch in London. The latter was about to quit it for Shrewsbury, and wished him to see it before he left. On his return, the conversation beneath the shade of my Talking Friend was incessant; but of all the sights which seemed most to impress our countryman Richard was the Monument but recently completed, and which stood at a distance of 202 feet from the house in Pudding Lane where the fire began. At the time of his visit, neither the offensive inscription on the house in Pudding-Lane nor that on the Monument existed, which gave origin to the lines of Pope, who was a Roman Catholic. They were both added in 1681, on the occasion of the plot of Titus Oates, in which probably few believe now. Indeed the inscription seems to have sorely puzzled Addison's Tory Fox-hunter, who, in his simplicity, had up to this time thought that it was the Presbyterians—and not the Dutch or the Roman Catholics—who had burnt the City. As for Pope's lines, they are in everyone's mouth:

> Where London's column, pointing to the skies
> Like a tall bully, lifts the head and lies!

Tillotson, Burnet tells us, believed that the City was burnt by design, stating that the Papists were generally charged with it. Southey, in his 'Book of the Church,' drew a very different inference, but he adds, 'The people, nevertheless were persuaded that London had been burnt by the Papists, and the public authorities partook of, or assented to, their credulity. The odium which this senseless calumny raised was kept up by men of great talents and consummate profligacy, who, from having been the wickedest Ministers, became the wickedest Opposition that ever dishonoured this kingdom.'

It was late in the year 1678 that old Samuel Rogers, a tenant of Cruckton, brought a strange piece of news into Meole about a Popish plot, all of which he detailed the next day, both at Cruckton and at the old homestead of Meole close by.

It was late when the old man left Shrewsbury that night—late at least for a man in his position, for most farmers of this age were fast asleep in their beds by eight o'clock. The innkeepers and the victuallers had hung out their lights according to the municipal order; indeed St. Chad's and St. Alkmund's bells were silent, and St. Mary's was tolling out its last peal, showing that it was near a quarter after nine. As he passed the Shilds on his way through the Stalks to Mardol Head, the whole of the neighbourhood seemed to be collected in knots, and were in earnest conversation, as they were likewise in Frankwell, where he halted for a while, having been allowed to pass the bridge—now called the Welsh Bridge, which had then its tower and gates.

As will have been anticipated, the plot here alluded to was that of Titus Oates, discovered to the king on August 13, 1678. It was, however, apparently, the murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey—the well-known justice of the peace who took the depositions of Oates against Coleman—which had excited the present commotion. Much was made of it at the time, infamous as Oates was personally; possibly too little was made of it afterwards, considering the tendencies of the king and the Duke of York. It is to this intent that Dryden's line, after he became a Romanist, has been quoted—

> Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies.

But, whether true or not, it created a great sensation in the county, and in the old town of Shrewsbury; and it was discussed even in the valley of the Rea, and beneath the shade of my Talking Friend. But, as it has nothing further to do with our history, I pass on to other matters, only quoting the passage which follows from the 'Life of the Lord-Keeper Guildford,' who in his 'Examen' gives an account of Oates's personal appearance, which is not more flattering than that given by Dryden in his 'Absalom and Achitophel.' 'He once,' says his biographer, Roger North, 'heard Oates preach at St. Dunstan's, and much admired his theatrical behaviour in the pulpit; he prayed for his very good lord and patron the Duke of Norfolk, which made his lordship suspect him to be warping towards popery. And when his lordship came to

know the particulars of his "discovery," although the king's life, forsooth, was to be saved, he took the whole to be an imposture calculated to disturb the public and bring evil upon his majesty; and after he had discussed with the Earl of Danby, who at first appeared a fautor of it, his lordship found such desultory steps taken as could agree with nothing but a cheat, and was confirmed in his opinion accordingly.'

It was somewhere about this time, in 1679 or 1680, that the party names, Whig and Tory, so well known now, were first heard in the vale. The Old Oak could not make out the forms of speech which he heard comers and goers using; and was surprised as he heard the better educated employ the words with much acrimony (the tannin of his weather-worn bark could not be more bitter) as they discussed political matters beneath his time-honoured shade. All this was quite unintelligible to him, and he only found it out at last through the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury. Even they, however, with all their 'clerkship' (the identical word used by my Talking Friend) could not explain the terms, and certainly it has very much puzzled many clear heads since their time, though it seems pretty generally admitted that the one is of Scotch, the other of Irish, derivation: 'WHIG,' which means a thin and sour liquor called '*whey*,' being applied to those who held to the Presbyterian cause; 'TORY,' which means an Irish '*bog-trotter*' or '*free-booter*,' being that affixed to the Popish outlaws who sought refuge in such wild retreats.

These names of party succeeded to the Petitioners and Abhorrers, the first given to the opponents of the Court, the latter to those who took the king's side. Looking to subsequent changes one calls to mind the words of the Clown in the 'Twelfth Night':

> And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.—Act v. sc. i.

Many different accounts have been given of these wide-world-known names, and not the least interesting will be found in North's 'Examen,' and in the Life of the Lord-Keeper Guildford' above referred to. His biographer very aptly says: 'While he was of opinion that the Tory party, in the temper of these times, pursued the true interest of

England, that is to support the Church and Crown according to the legal establishment of both, he was a Tory as they called it. But when the Tory party, or rather some pretended leaders, exceeded in joining with such as exalted the power of the Crown above the law, and sought to pull down the Church, then he was dropped from the Tory list and turned Trimmer. And so any fair, honest man shall find himself as it were changed, when in truth he is the same, only the world—to which the change belongs—passeth by him.' As usual, Lord Macaulay gives a graphic account of these names in his 'History,' but with his usual colouring.

Meanwhile it began to be seen generally that difficulties were arising; and thinking men, both Whigs and Tories too, became aware that the liberty of the subject might be incompatible with the rule of the Stuarts. This fear was increased when, in the year 1683, the city of London forfeited its charter, as it was said, for exacting an illegal toll, and for denouncing the Duke of York. 'Flushed,' says Macaulay, 'with this great victory, the Government proceeded to attack the constitutions of other corporations which were governed by Whig officers, and which had been in the habit of returning Whig members to Parliament. Borough after borough was compelled to surrender its privileges, and new charters were granted which gave the ascendency everywhere to the Tories.'

The Lord-Keeper Guildford was alive to this great abuse. As the biographer of the Norths remarks, 'It is to be remembered that at this time the trade of procuring charters to be surrendered was grown into a great abuse; and nothing was accounted at Court so meritorious as the procuring of charters, as the language then was.' All charters were to fall down before the Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys—of whom more by-and-by.

The reason the matter of charters is introduced here is that the Old Town was concerned in it, and the rector of Hanwood, owing to his connections there, was an interested person. At this time, indeed, when all sorts of plots were in agitation, and when, as I said, men were concerned about their liberties, Shrewsbury was thought to be factious and

ill-affected. So hostile indeed had been the measures of the king and his brother to the liberty of the subject, or as our historians express it, 'to the liberties, the religion, and even the honour of their country, since the banishment of Clarendon, that many, even of the best affected, as our Lord Newport, had gradually relaxed from the ardour of their loyalty, and others of the best-intentioned, as his nephew Lord Russell, went great lengths to obtain a more limited form of government.'

This was well known at Court, and probably hastened the demand of the old town's charter, which, however, it was in no hurry to give up. For a year it appears the proud Salopians hesitated, but at length, on January 13, 1684, 'at a full assembly, it was agreed unanimously that the charter of the town shall be surrendered and yielded up to his Majesty when his pleasure is to require it.' It is only necessary to add here that, although some preliminary steps were taken, all further proceedings were stopped by the king's death, which took place February 6, 1685.

It was owing to the connection existing between Lord Newport and Lord Russell that the Rye-House Plot—Rumbold's house on the Heath, on the way from Newmarket was called Rye, and hence the name[1]—was bruited about in Shrewsbury, though probably, as old Bishop Butler used to tell us, a fiction from the beginning to the end. But if the boys on the Severn's side doubted as to the plot, the names of Russell and Sidney (the latter so dear to them) were always great names in their ears, and they told each other as they walked by the Barge Gutter, discussing the political interests of those bygone days, how Lord Russell, just before his execution, said to Tillotson and Burnet as he wound up his watch, 'Now he had done with time, and was going to eternity.' He was executed July 21, 1683, and his attainder reversed in the first Parliament after the revolution.

Algernon Sidney, though always a favourite with the Shrewsbury boys—for who ever forgot that Sir Philip was educated within the school walls?—was a different man from Lord Russell, and one whose character (for he was heady

[1] Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 188.

and high-minded, a sceptic, and a pensioner of France) will not bear the same investigation. Still he was convicted illegally. The trial was on November 21, and he was beheaded on December 7. 'His execution,' says Burnet, 'was respited for three weeks, the trial being universally cried out on as a piece of most enormous injustice.' To which he presently adds, 'He concluded with a prayer that the nation might be preserved from idolatry and tyranny, and he said he rejoiced that he suffered for the old cause, in which he was so early engaged. These last words furnished much matter to the scribblers of that time. In his imprisonment he sent for some Independent preachers and expressed to them a deep remorse for his past sins, and great confidence in the mercies of God. And indeed he met death with an unconcernedness that became one who had set up Marcus Brutus for his pattern. He was but a few minutes on the scaffold at Tower Hill; he spoke little and prayed very short, and his head was cut off at a blow.'

'About this time,' said my Talking Friend to me one day, 'people as they passed told how the yew-trees in Hanwood churchyard were making fine shoots,' and he added he was pleased to hear it, and hoped that they might grow as the old one had done, of which no man knew the date, so old was it!

The old yew-tree is still in a green old age, and would attract the attention of a traveller from Lorton, or of a *statesman* of Borrowdale. The new ones my Talking Friend alluded to were planted round the churchyard by Mr. Phillips of Meole, November, 1734. It had been previously planted with fir trees (in the year 1729), which luckily died out and were replaced by yews. It was a satisfaction to Nehemiah Evans, or Evance, who was rector of Hanwood from 1654 to 1698, to watch their growth. Before his death they began to bear berries.

For several years previous to this there had been great disputes in the old town on the subject of Nonconformity, but it little affected the humble peasantry on the Rea-side, though my Talking Friend frequently heard the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury discussing the 'Unreasonableness

of Separation.' He did not know in his honest simplicity that they were referring to the now well-known work of Stillingfleet, which did good service in its day, and is still a repository of sound wisdom. None knew better than he did that uncalled-for differences and dissensions were sure to open wide the portals to Romanism, as they presently did. A third edition of his book was published in 1682, so that the memory of my Talking Friend served him well in regard to the conversation of the two rectors. Stillingfleet ends his preface with these words: 'The zeal I have for the true Protestant Religion, for the honour of His Church, and for a firm union among brethren, hath transported me beyond the bounds of a preface, which I do now conclude with my hearty prayers to Almighty God that He, who is the God of Peace and the Fountain of Wisdom, would so direct the council of those in authority, and incline the hearts of the people, that we may neither run into a wilderness of confusion, nor be *driven into the abyss of Popery*, but that the true religion being preserved among us, we may with one heart and one mind serve the only true God, through His only Son, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, and our alone Mediator and Advocate' (p. xciv).

My Talking Friend told me of a long and memorable drought which occurred about this time, when, as he stated, 'his leaves were ready to fall in August, and the midsummer shoot had come to nothing.' This was evidently in 1684, as I pick up from the following insertions in Evelyn's Diary:

'1684, 2 *July*.—There had been an excessive hot and dry spring, and such a droght still continued as never was in my memorie. 13 *July*.—Some small sprinkling of raine; the leaves dropping from the trees in y^e^ autumn. 10 *Aug*.—We had now rain after such a drouth as no man in England had known. 24.—Excessive hot. We had not had above one or two considerable showers, and those storms, these 8 or 9 months. Many trees died for want of refreshment.'

Nothing further seems to have occurred in this king's reign which attracted the notice of my Talking Friend. The account of his death at St. James's, February 6, 1685, reached Shrewsbury within a little while, and later in the month

was talked of throughout the valley of the Rea. The current report was that he died a Papist, and some went so far as to say that he was poisoned—and, as it was whispered, by a certain subtle powder which had been prepared by the Jesuits; but it seems highly improbable that if he died in the arms of Rome the Romanists should have been in league to shorten his life.

The powder here alluded to was the well-known Jesuits' bark, which, as Burnet informs us, the king had taken in a previous illness in 1679, when he adds, 'The fits did not return after the king took "*quinquina*," called in England "the Jesuits' powder,"' or the '*cortex*,' as it stands in the life of the Lord-Keeper Guildford, who had no suspicion whatever of poison. The doctor, in fact, having come to the conclusion that the malady which followed the fit was 'a fever,' thought he could now use the *quinquina*, and it was administered to him whilst life lasted, though Evelyn says it 'made him worse.' This was after he had been bled by Dr. King, who said, as he acted promptly, 'that it was impossible to save the king's life if one minute was lost, and that he would rather venture on the riogur of the law than leave the king to perish.' Such are Burnet's words.

Something presently must be said of Charles II.'s death and character. Meanwhile, as my Talking Friend was very inquisitive on the subject, and as the Jesuits' bark has turned out one of the most valuable medicines in existence, the reader, no less than the Old Oak, may like to hear some account of it, as given in Mr. Markham's very valuable work, 'Travels in Peru and India,' into which latter country at immense cost, and no small labour and peril, he has been the successful means of introducing the young tree from Peru, and they are now flourishing in the Neilgherry hills and elsewhere, with every prospect of increase. The few heads which follow relate only to the earlier introduction of this invaluable bark, but all that relates to it, up to the present day, will be found in Mr. Markham's volume.

We now call this wonderful febrifugal alkaloid—extracted from the chinchona tree of South America—by the name of *quinine; quina* in the Quichua language meaning *a bark*,

and *quina quina* reduplicated, *barks*; but whether it was used as a febrifuge by the Indians seems doubtful, though many curious, if not fabulous, stories are told on the subject.

Mr. Markham informs us that what cured the Countess of Chincon was the *chinchonidino*—an alkaloid, the great importance of which is only just beginning to be recognised. The Count of Chincon returned to Spain in 1640; and his 'countess, bringing with her a quantity of the healing bark, was the first person to introduce this valuable medicine into Europe. Hence it was sometimes called Countess' bark, and Countess' powder'—a name not yet obsolete.

It was in 1670, Mr. Markham says, 'that the Jesuit missionaries sent parcels of the powdered bark to Rome, whence it was distributed to members of the fraternity throughout Europe by Cardinal de Lugo, and used for the cure of agues with great success. Hence the name of "Jesuits' bark" and "Cardinal's bark," and it was a ludicrous result of its patronage by the Jesuits, that its use should have been for a long time opposed by Protestants and favoured by Roman Catholics. In 1679 Louis XIV. bought the receipt for preparing *quinquina* from Sir Robert Talbot, an English doctor, for 2,000 louis d'or, a large pension, and a title. From that time Peruvian bark seems to have been recognised as the most efficacious remedy for intermittent fevers.'

Much patience has been required at all times, and much suffering has been undergone, in the introducing of valuable remedies; and after fifteen years of laborious work Joseph de Jussieu was robbed of his large collection of chinchona plants 'by a servant at Buenos Ayres, who believed that the boxes contained money. The loss had a disastrous effect on poor Jussieu, who, in 1771, returned to France, deprived of reason, after an absence of thirty-four years.'

The same reckless waste attended the chinchona trees as has been the case with other beneficial products of nature down to the days of gutta-percha, and 'as early as 1735 Ulloa reported to the Spanish Government that the habit of cutting down the trees in the forest of Loxa, and afterwards barking them, without taking the precaution of planting others in their places, would undoubtedly cause their complete extir-

pation. "Though the trees are numerous," he added, "yet they have an end"; and he suggested that the Corregidor of Loxa should be directed to appoint an overseer, whose duty it should be to examine the forests, and satisfy himself that a tree was planted in place of every one that was cut down, on pain of a fine. This rule was never enforced, and sixty years afterwards Humboldt reported that 25,000 trees were destroyed in one year.' So great was the waste of this valuable tree!

Dr. Gomez, a surgeon in the Portuguese navy in 1816, was, our author tells us, 'the first to isolate the febrifugal principle. He called it *chinchonine*; but the final discovery of *quinine* is due to the French chemists Pelletier and Caventou, in 1820.' Don Francisco José de Caldas, a native of New Granada, one of the most eminent men that South America has yet produced, who promised in one of his memoirs a botanical chart of the chinchona genus, was shot by the brutal General Morillo, after his entrance into Bogota in 1816. Thus far Mr. Markham, whose book will be read with the greatest interest by all who wish to pursue the subject.

On a former occasion my Talking Friend had stood up for the bark of his forefathers, and had likewise intimated that the bark of the willows by the Rea-side had been efficacious in its way; but, on hearing what I had to say on the subject of quinine, he admitted, with his usual sterling good sense, the great value of the discovery; and he added that 'ground bark steeped in port wine must have been a very odious concoction!' Upon another occasion he informed me that the boiling of the willow bark was 'a long process, and that it was kept simmering on the hob from week's end to week's end, mixed up with other bitter herbs.'

Such was the *cortex*, or the *quinquina*, administered ineffectually, in its earlier shape, to the dying Charles, of whom my Talking Friend, albeit Heart of Oak and loyal to the backbone, entertained but a very low opinion, though his opinion of James II. was certainly no higher. 'A friend of the old rector of Hanwood, Nehemiah Evans' (or Evance: the Old Oak pronounced the name *Ivvans*), 'said to him beneath these very boughs,' observed my Talking Friend one

day: "My opinion is that since the time of Stephen no monarch was ever so disloyal to the nation as the second Charles. He coquetted with France, and became her pensioner, betrayed his people, and unkinged himself!" The words were notable words, and I was not likely to forget them; though at the same time I thought that King John, who would have sold us to Mahomet, was an equally unworthy monarch—unworthy of that name, at least, in these realms, where the liberty of the subject is the preservation of the Body Politic.' In the words of Bishop Short in his sketch: 'The circumstance which must load Charles and his brother with a political infamy, which nothing can wipe away, was the manner in which they separated their own supposed interest from that of the country. Because they could not govern England according to their own wishes they were ready to become themselves the pensionaries of France, and to sell the interests of Britain, that they might obtain the means of enslaving it. This project seems to have flowed from James rather than from Charles; but it is shameless enough even to have entertained the idea.'

But what is to be said of his apostasy? Severe as are the words of Bishop Burnet, one must, nevertheless, painfully admit their truth:

'No part of his character looked wickeder, as well as meaner, than that he, all the while that he was professing to be of the Church of England, expressing both zeal and affection for it, was yet secretly reconciled to the Church of Rome; thus mocking God and deceiving the world with so gross a prevarication, and his not having the honesty or courage to own it at the last; his not showing any sign of the least remorse for his ill-led life; or any tenderness either for his subjects in general or for the queen and his servants; and his recommending only his mistresses and their children to his brother's care, would have been a strange conclusion to any other's life, but was well enough suited to all the other parts of his.' So spake Burnet, concluding his life of Charles II. with these memorable words: 'How ungrateful soever this labour has proved to myself and how unacceptable soever it may be to some who are either obliged to re-

member him gratefully or by the engagement of parties and interests or under other biases, yet I have gone through all that I knew relating to his life and reign with that regard to truth, and what I think may be instructive to mankind, which becomes an impartial writer of history, and one who believes that he must give an account to God of what he writes, as well as of what he says and does.'

And yet, notwithstanding what has been said, it was thought that Charles had within him the elements of an able man and an able king. *Capax imperii*, as the great annalist said, *nisi imperâsset.* Whether or no, he might have been a very popular one had he not recklessly given himself up to his pleasures, and then given up his faith and the religion of his Baptism!

One thing was certainly in his favour, which the English people love—he never secluded himself like an Oriental despot, but might be seen at early hours in the park, chattering affably with all comers, and walking them off their legs, when he had fed his pet wild-fowl, who would eat out of his hand. Then again, in private, 'when he had a mind to lay aside the king, which he often did in select companies of his own, there were a thousand invisible charms in his conversation,' for, as expressed in the 'Life of the Lord-Keeper Guildford': 'He was a free talker himself, and encouraged it in those about him.' Indeed, the Lord-Keeper said of him that he thought Charles II. understood foreign affairs better than all his councils and counsellors put together; for, by reason of his unhappy exile and travel, he had either a personal acquaintance with most eminent statesmen in Europe, or else, from such as could instruct, searched their character, on whom the crises of most courts depended.' No doubt the Lord-Keeper was prejudiced in his favour, but even if we cannot fall in with his views, a sense of melancholy forces itself upon the mind in reading this closing sentence of his biographer, 'With the death of this good master and sovereign, all his lordship's hopes and joys perished, and the rest of his life, which lasted not long after, was but a slow dying.'

The life of the two Charleses was constantly discussed by Shrewsbury boys, and for this reason many particulars

have been embodied in these pages. I conclude with the account of the amiable and excellent Evelyn—so charitable yet so true!

'Thus died King Charles II. of a vigorous and robust constitution, and in all appearance promising a long life. He was a prince of many virtues and many greate imperfections; debonaire, easy of accesse, not bloody nor cruel; his countenance fierce, his voice greate, proper of person, every motion became him; a lover of the sea, and skilful in shipping; not affecting other studies, and yet he had a laboratory, and knew of many empyrical medicines, and the easier mechanical mathematics; he loved planting and building, and brought in a politic way of living, which passed to luxury and intolerable expence. He had a particular talent in telling a story and facetial passages, of which he had innumerable; this made some buffoons and vicious wretches too presumptuous and familiar, not worthy the favour they abused. He took delight in having a number of little spaniels follow him and lie in his bed-chamber, where he often suffered the bitches to puppy and give suck, which rendered it very offensive, and indeed made the whole Court nasty and stinking. He would doubtless have been an excellent prince had he been less addicted to women, who made him uneasy and always in want to supply that unmeasurable profusion, to y^e^ detriment of many indigent persons who had signally served both him and his father. He frequently and easily changed favorites, to his greate prejudice. As to other publique transactions and unhappy miscarriages, 'tis not here I intend to number them; but certainly never had king more glorious opportunities to have made himselfe, his people, and all Europe happy, and prevented innumerable mischiefs, had not his too easy nature resigned him to be managed by crafty men and some abandoned and profane wretches, who corrupted his otherwise sufficient parts, disciplined as he had been by many afflictions during his banishment, which gave him much experience and knowledge both of men and things; but those wicked creatures took him off from all application becoming so greate a king. The history of this reign will certainly be the most wonderful in the variety of matter and accidents, above any extant in

former ages: the sad tragical death of his father, his banishment and hardships, his miraculous restauration, conspiracies against him, parliaments, wars, plagues, fires, comets, revolutions abroad happening in his time, with a thousand other particulars. He was ever kind to me, and very gracious upon all occasions, and therefore I cannot, without ingratitude, but deplore his losse, which for many respects, as well as duty, I do with all my soule.'

Whatever Charles II. was, to read such words is pleasant, and certainly his almost sudden death created a great sensation. 'The people were so passionately concerned that North says, in his "Examen" and appeals to all who recollected the time, for the truth of his averment, that it was rare to meet a person walking the streets with dry eyes.' Such is the note of Scott on these lines of the 'Threnodia Augustalis':

> The amazing news of Charles at once was spread,
> At once the general voice declared,
> Our gracious prince was dead.
> No sickness known before, nor slow disease,
> To soften grief by just degrees;
> But like an hurricane on Indian seas,
> The tempest rose;
> An unexpected burst of wails,
> With scarce a breathing place betwixt,
> This now becalmed, and perishing the next.

I had been meditating on the end of the Second Charles, and had seated myself beneath the shade of my Talking Friend, when all at once four or five donkeys, driven by women in almost men's attire, passed by, all loaded with crockery-ware, and, as I soon found out, on their way to Snailbeach and Minsterley, for up to a very recent time the commonest earthenware was used at the lead mines.

Suddenly there was the well-known rustling of the Old Oak's leaves and I knew he was going to make some remark or another, little divining what. At last he said, 'The life as well as the dress of those potter women is peculiar. They are the vendors of what their husbands are the makers. Most of their ware comes from Burslem, in Staffordshire, but the mankind sort of women who have just passed are from

Broseley, and are well known in the neighbourhood. They come two or three times in the year, according to the demand, but their last visit is always after harvest, when there is a great call for their goods.'

Whereupon there was a pause, and as I was looking wistfully up the Pontesbury road on the motley procession, the leaves of the Old Tree shook again, and he remarked that 'no doubt by this time *treen-ware*' (by which he meant wooden cups, known to country people as noggins, whiskins, &c., and in Shropshire more particularly as *piggins*) 'has become a great rarity, whereas formerly the tyg, or cup, with one or more handles well pegged inside, some pegs high, and some low, were in general use.'

On my asking the good old chronicler if 'pottery had not been always in common use' he replied that it had, and that 'British pottery was peculiar in make and shape, but that treen-cups still kept their place in old homesteads like that of Meole long after the introduction of Delft ware, which partially superseded the pewter vessels introduced by the Normans—or said to have been. At all events it was found in monastery kitchens as early as 1386, as is to be collected from the 'Kitchener's Roll of Tewkesbury Abbey.' It is stated by the authoress of Josiah Wedgewood's Life that, 'In 1430 King James of Scotland imported from London for his own use, eight dozen pewter vessels and twelve hundred wooden bowls packed in four barrels, and earlier still than this pewter plates and dishes were used at the feasts of the city companies, and pewter pots in the City taverns as a legal measure'—the modern pewter pot.

There is an old proverb that 'The master's eye buys the horse.' The parallel to it is, 'The mistress's eye keeps the pewter bright,' and it was formerly, no doubt, in great repute. Grumio, it will be recollected, in the 'Taming of the Shrew,' when speaking of his richly-furnished home in the city, after having enumerated plate and gold and Tyrian tapestry, and Turkey cushions and valence of Venice gold in needlework, still adds to the list—

> Pewter and brass, and all things that belong
> To house or housekeeping.

My Talking Friend quite well recollected the introduction of Delft-ware for household use, as well as that of the Delft-tiles in blue and white, for the sides of fire-places, of which there were many at Meole, presented to old Joseph Warter by a Dutch merchant in London. It was subsequent to this that the garnish of pewter on old dressers became so fashionable, in farm-houses especially—a fashion which lasted till our own times. The authoress above quoted says, 'A garnish of vessel generally consisted of three dozen plates and dishes, and one dozen saucers, every six dishes and platters varying in size. When worn out or become obsolete in form, it was customary to exchange these services for "garnysh of the newest fashyon," the pewterer allowing so much for the old metal,' as is now the case with silver as London seasons vary. The term in general use, in those days, was 'garnyshe of vessell.'

All this was corroborated by the information of my Talking Friend, who admitted fairly and liberally that oak did not make the best 'treen-cups,' but beech and birch and sycamore, and the softer woods; though he added, with proper pride, that there was nothing like oak for king-post roofs and queen-post roofs and rafters and ridge-pieces, which were to abide the teeth of time! And so I rose up from beneath his hospitable shade, and the potters pursued their way.

Mr. Palgrave tells us in his 'Central Arabia' that the great aloe of Hasa, with its thorny leaves and dense tufts, is high enough to shelter travellers, camels and all. How much would the Bedouin, far away from his palm-tree groves, have given for one hour's rest beneath the Old Oak's over-reaching boughs? One was he that might have said as he sheltered the wayfarer from wind or sun—

> If our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
> As if we had them not.

It has been before mentioned that the occupiers of the old homestead at Meole had been at all times great lovers of horticulture, and it was about this time that the friendly Dutch merchant above mentioned brought over to Joseph Warter many seeds of the cabbage kind, which he cultivated by the Rea-side with great success. Some, from my Talking

Friend's account, would appear to have been tall, like the modern broccoli and Brussels sprouts, but the amateur gardener cut withy saplings from the brook side and tied them to the lattice work with rushes. No new invention this, but one used by the Romans, to whom the common Brassica was no stranger, for old Vertumnus, in his vanity, tells us—

> Cæruleus cucumis, tumidoque cucurbita ventre,
> Me notat, et junco brassica vincta levi.

Bresic, it is said, is the Celtic name of the cabbage, and wild specimens of the *Brassica oleracea* are still found on the seashore at Dover ; as are the *Crambe maritima*, or sea-kale, and the *Apium graveolens*, the smallage, or wild celery—pretty generally—between Worthing and Southampton.

My Talking Friend added that many new sorts of apples, pears, and strawberries were to be found in the gardens at Meole, and that the medlar and quince grew well there, the latter always loving to touch the water with its fibres, and not always water that is the clearest, for it was named 'The Privy Apple!'

It is Rosalind that says in Shakespeare's 'As You Like It'—

> O, how full of briers is this working-day world !

and so old Joseph Warter, who had domestic cares and troubles enough, betook him to his garden and cultivated plants and shrubs and flowers. When other things went wrong, his garden very generally went right, and he might be seen there by passers-by grafting his trees and weeding his strawberries and spudding his walks, as though he had nothing else to do in life, whereas all the while he was an active country gentleman, an improver of his estate, and one who set a good example to all around him—a good churchman, a good landlord, and, if it seem necessary to add, a good man !

I may add in conclusion that it was a little before this that Henry Teonge wrote his Diary (he was a chaplain on board his Majesty's ships 'Assistance,' 'Bristol,' and 'Royal Oak,' anno 1675 to 1679) ; and as I have mentioned old Joseph Warter's cultivation of the 'Brassica,' whatever it was, I may

add the account of his dinner in 'Port Mahone Peak,' on 'Good Christmas Day,' 1678 :—

'We goe to prayers at 10 ; and the wind roase of such a sudden, that I was forced (by the Captain's command) to conclude abruptly at the end of the Letany ; and wee had no sermon. And soone after, by the carlessness of som, our barge at starne was almost sunk, but recovered. We had not so greate a dinner as we intended, for the whole fleete being in this harbour, beife could not be gott. But wee had to dinner an excellent rice pudding, in a greate charger, a speciall piece of Martinmas English beefe, and a neat's tongue, and *good cabbige*, a charger full of excellent fresh fish fryde, *a douzen of woodcocks in a pye*, which cost 15*d.*, a couple of good henns roasted, 3 sorts of cheese, and last of all, a greate charger full of blew figgs, almonds, and raysings, and wine and punch gallore, and a douzen of English pippins.'

The 'cabbiges' and the 'English pippins' good old Joseph Warter could have furnished, but not the woodcocks, though a descendant of his might have done so, out of the Vessen's Coppice.

My dear old friend Calhoun, sometime Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and afterwards Vicar of Goring, once met an old Mr. Gell, of Appleham, on Shoreham Bridge, Sussex, who entreated him to come and dine, saying 'he had a Sussex pudding with two dozen snipes and a beefsteak in it.' My good old friend smiled in his simplicity and said had he not been going home to a funeral he could not have resisted such an engagement ! Such puddings and pies will never be seen again in this country, I suspect ; perhaps no better men to eat them !

CHAPTER XL.

THE LAST STUART.

Jam voce doloris
Utendum est.

LUCAN, *Phars.* v. 494.

Tantum Relligio potuit suadere malorum.

LUCRET. i. 102.

To know ourselves to come of human birth,
These sad afflictions cross us here on earth,
A punishment from that eternal law,
To make us still of heaven to stand in awe.

WILLIAM DE LA POLE, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, TO QUEEN MARGARET.
DRAYTON, i. 316.

I am now to prosecute this work, and to give the relation of an inglorious and unprosperous reign, that was begun with great advantages: but these were so poorly managed, and so ill improved, that bad designs were ill-laid and worse conducted, and all came, in conclusion, to one of the strangest catastrophes that is in any history.

BURNET'S *Own Times*, 'James II.' vol. ii. 277.

Novi ego ingenium viri
Indocile: flecti non potest, frangi potest.

SENEC. *Thyest.* ii. 24.

OLD John Jaundrell—whose son, Thomas Jaundrell, was living at Little Hanwood in 1725—had been to Shrewsbury in the second week of February, 1684–5, as he said, to purchase a hat at the well-known shop in Mardol, where such commodities, mixed with otter and other skins, hung on old-fashioned 'open baulks or shutters, which, swung on hinges, were turned back and secured at night.' A regular mart was this for news, quite as much so as the Shilds, and the Gullet-shut, and the Market Place; and here it was that worthy John Jaundrell first heard that Charles II. was no more, and

that the 'Corporation had sent up an address to their new sovereign, expressive of their joyfulness in his succession, and humbly thanking him for his gracious declaration in preferring the Protestant religion; no obscure intimation,' add our historians, 'of their wishes on that momentous subject which then engaged all ranks with an intensity of interest difficult to be conceived in the present generation.' Certainly the old county held no Papistic views.

It was on his way back from Shrewsbury, where he left old St. Chad's bells ringing, that John Jaundrell, as he passed the rectory at Hanwood, called in to tell the worthy rector, Nehemiah Evans, what he had heard; and it must be confessed that the rector, according to my Talking Friend's account, did not receive the news with any satisfaction. On the contrary, he thought we were likely to have troublous days, and he added, in marked words, 'he did not think James II. a person to lay his head in peace on the lap of any one of his subjects'—a remark as old as the Diet of Worms, April 4, 1521.

On inquiring of my Talking Friend if he knew of anything that immediately concerned the valley of the Rea at this period he said he did not; but he added that the inhabitants of the old homestead at Meole were much concerned about the new charter for Shrewsbury, and did not like the drift of it. On referring to our records, it will be seen that it was received by the corporation on March 17. The provisions of it are given by our historians; and these were clearly and evidently such as to place the liberties of the town immediately in the hands of the crown. In fact, had all provisions in all charters been peremptorily acted upon, all corporations would have become mere nomination boroughs, and the king's Papistic views strongly abetted. And if any ask—

What! can so young a thorn begin to prick?

and would the king, at the commencement of his reign, have so openly shown his tendencies, and that, too, in a county so sternly opposed to Romanism as Shropshire? the answer must be given in the words of a very old saw—

For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorn!

And so it turned out. For, anticipating the time, and putting the matter all together, the king despatched a mandate to Shrewsbury under his sign manual, dated January 1, 1687–8, 'countersigned by Lord Sunderland, president of the council, informing them that he had removed Charles, Earl of Shrewsbury, from the office of their recorder,' &c. &c., requiring them to make other elections, without administering to those elected 'any oath or oaths (but the usual oath for the execution of their respective places) with which we are pleased to dispense in this behalf.' All this was submitted to, but at the same time with this remark: 'Although this Corporation is very sensible that upon the death or removal of any person, the right of election of a new member doth by charter belong unto, and is vested in this Corporation.'

Such was the movement which distressed the inmates of the old homestead at Meole, on the Rea-side, staunch Protestants, one and all of them. Nor were they mistaken in the views they took of James's determination, if he could, to restore Popery, and to have a House of Commons which would disregard those 'tests which guarded the Established Church.' And it may be added, as his name has been just above mentioned, that Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, was the worst adviser James could have had—being a convert to Romanism, and one who urged the worst measures; a traitor withal, and a pensioner of France; and all the while holding a secret correspondence with the minister of the Prince of Orange!

Of the encounter at Sedgmoor, near Bridgewater, July 6, this year, and of the death of the Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded on Tower Hill, July 15, little was known in the valley of the Rea at this time, but Judge Jeffreys's and Colonel Kirke's barbarities were afterwards very severely commented upon, and the more so as Judge Jeffreys had been a Shrewsbury boy at the Schools before he went to Westminster. Never, indeed, was anything more infamous than what the king called 'Jeffreys's Campaign.' Of these frightful excesses Burnet tells us that James took pleasure in giving the relation 'in the drawing-room to foreign ministers, and at his table calling it "Jeffreys's Campaign"; speaking of all that he had done in a style that neither became the majesty nor the

mercifulness of a great prince.' The Lord-Keeper Guildford is said to have remonstrated with the king by telling him that such proceedings 'would be accounted a carnage, and not law or justice,' but there is some doubt upon the point. At all events, the number of rebels executed is said to have amounted to three hundred and twenty.

Of Bishop Ken's beautiful character, and of his labour of love on this occasion, this is not the place to speak; but history records it, and it is a page one loves to turn to. Macaulay's account of the Lord-Keeper, as of a man 'sullied by cowardice, selfishness, and servility,' is one I could not acquiesce in; but his conception of the saintly Ken's life, a few words excepted, is just and right. 'The chief friend and protector of those unhappy men in their extremity was one who abhorred their religious and political opinions, one whose order they hated, and to whom they had done unprovoked wrong, Bishop Ken. That good prelate used all his influence to soften the gaolers, and retrenched from his own episcopal state that he might be able to make some addition to the coarse and scanty fare of those who had defaced his beloved Cathedral. His conduct on this occasion was of a piece with his whole life. His intellect was, indeed, darkened by many superstitions and prejudices [?]; but his moral character, when impartially reviewed, sustains a comparison with any in ecclesiastical history, and seemed to approach, as near as human infirmity permits, to the ideal perfection of Christian virtue.'

If, as it would appear from Fox's 'History of the Reign of James,' and from Lord Lonsdale's 'Memoirs,' the Duke of Monmouth lost much of his reputation for courage, Bishop Mew of Winchester certainly did not; and nobly, most nobly, does Bishop Ken shine forth as a man of peace! We may set this down against what Burnet says of the English clergy, in which he is followed, of course, by Macaulay. They had plenty of faults, and the dramatists laid hold on them, but they were not so remiss as Burnet and Macaulay thought.

It was remarked above that Judge Jeffreys was a Shrewsbury boy, and I bethought me I would ask my Talking Friend if he could give me any information about him. His very leaves shuddered with horror at the mention of his name,

and he declared it to be infamous for cruelty, and rejoiced that his education was not completed at Shrewsbury, but at Westminster. And he added that after the 'Bloody Assize' in the West of England, no one in these parts could endure to think that he had been Baron of Wem; it was enough to make old Pandulph walk!

In the year 1684 he made his journey to the North. This was in the autumn, and, as Lord Campbell expresses it, his 'campaign in the North was almost as fatal to corporations as that in the West the following year proved to the lives of men.' Wherever the character of Jeffreys cropped out it was with atrocity. Of this a notorious instance occurred in the year following, when the excellent Richard Baxter was brought before him and accused of certain reflections on the Church contained in his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament.' Bent, like the willow, with years and infirmities, and a constant sickness, the good man begged for time to prepare his defence, but the brutal Jeffreys refused it at once, and in one of his furies exclaimed, 'Not a minute to save his life. I can deal with saints as well as with sinners'—calling him, when the trial came on, 'an old rogue, a schismatical knave, a hypocritical villain,' adding at the same time mockery to insult. All this he bore patiently, but when he would have spoken a word for himself, humbly and respectfully telling how Dissenters had blamed him for speaking well of bishops, the outpouring of Jeffreys's rage was greater than ever, and he bellowed — such is Macaulay's apt term — 'Richard, Richard, dost thou think we will let thee poison the Court? Richard, thou art an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, and every book is as full of sedition as an egg is full of meat. By the grace of God, I will look after thee,' &c., &c.

These and other worse terms were applied to this saint of the Lord. He was tried on May 30, and sentenced to fine and imprisonment June 29. The fine was 500*l.*, and he had to give security for his good behaviour for seven years! And the unjust judge was now a peer—'Baron Jeffreys of Wem!'

At this, as before remarked, my Talking Friend had taken umbrage, and he often told how the whole of the valley of the

Rea felt aggrieved, and how all his old friends in Shrewsbury felt as though an indignity had been passed upon themselves. Such is the force of truth—such the force of Christian character!

The Bloody Assize in the West—in the fall of the year 1685—has been touched upon before, together with the conduct of the saintly Bishop Ken. But into the horrors of that sad time—whether as relates to the unjust sentences passed on others, or the beheading of the Lady Lisle—it needs not here to enter. Even yet blood cries from the ground, and within the memory of men now living nothing worse could be said to frighten a child at Bristol and Taunton than 'Jeffreys is coming!' It was like the 'Bony is coming!' of our own childhood. 'His behaviour,' says Burnet, 'was beyond anything that was ever heard of in a civilised nation. He was perpetually either drunk or in a rage, liker a fury than the zeal of a judge.' And he made a boast that he had hung more men than all the judges in England since the time of William the Conqueror. As Hume puts it: 'He wantoned in cruelty, and set out with a savage joy, as to a full harvest of death and destruction.' Such was the compassion of the inhuman Major-General Kirke—as inhuman as the Moors of Tangier amongst whom he had sojourned—the wretch who used by way of pleasantry to call his own regiment *his lambs*, 'an appellation which was long remembered with horror in the West of England.' At Taunton alone were 500 prisoners, and Jeffreys said with that savage laugh which was one of the worst features of his brutal countenance: 'It would not be his fault if he did not purify the place.' No wonder he carried consternation with him, when, as Hume says, 'all the rigours of justice, unabated by any appearance of clemency, were fully displayed to the people by the inhuman Jeffreys.'

It has been a mooted question with some whether Jeffreys or the king was more to blame for these cruelties under the name of justice, and we see that Southey calls James II. inhuman. Lord Campbell's conclusion is, 'The two are equally criminal;' and yet, surely, a judge upon the bench should have withstood the cruel wrath of a king!

The reward of all these iniquitous proceedings was that the peer—Baron Jeffreys of Wem—was made lord chan-

cellor. On his way back he stopped at Windsor Castle, by express command, and on September 28 was presented with the great seal—and his boyish hopes and ambition were fulfilled! We pick up from Evelyn's 'Diary' that the lord-keeper died on the fifth of this month, and that Sir Dudley and Roger North brought the great seal to his Majesty on February 6. 'The king,' he adds, 'went immediately to council; everybody guessing who was most likely to succeed to this greate officer, most believing it could be no other than my Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, who had so vigorously prosecuted the late rebels, and was now gone the western circuit to punish the rest that were secured in the several counties, and was now near upon his returne.'

As we have seen, he returned to be lord chancellor, and his house in Duke Street was long known with its freestone stairs into the Park which the king conceded to him. The chapel in Duke Street is the remnant of his great hall in which he transacted his judicial business out of term. Of his acts as lord chancellor there is not room to speak here, but they were unwise enough. As, for example, his acquiescing in Roman Catholics being introduced into the Cabinet, contrary to the Test Act; in the revival of the High Commission Court; in the proceedings against Dr. Sharp, afterwards Archbishop of York; and still worse in those against Magdalen College, Oxford. But of all the unwise and injudicious steps he ever took the one most fatal to himself and to the throne was that which involved the king in the prosecution of the Seven Bishops, which followed the new 'Declaration of Indulgence,' issued April 25, 1688. For it was now—on the king's again issuing the Declaration for the Liberty of Conscience (as it was called), and on his order to have it read in their churches by the clergy—that Archbishop Sancroft, and six other bishops, prayed to be excused, and were committed to the Tower.

'Popular feeling,' says Southey, in that excellent book, 'The Book of the Church,' 'has seldom been more strongly, never more worthily excited, than on this memorable occasion. The news spread immediately through London, and as the bishops proceeded down the r ver to their place of con-

finement, the banks were crowded with spectators, who, while they knelt and asked their blessing, prayed themselves for a blessing on them and their cause. The very soldiers who guarded them, and some even of the officers to whose charge they were committed, knelt in like manner before them, and besought their benediction. They, the while, strictly consistent in their meek and magnanimous course of duty which they had chosen, exhorted the people to fear God, honour the king, and maintain their loyalty. In the evening they attended in the Tower Chapel; and the second lesson for that service being the chapter wherein the Apostle Paul describes by what trials he approved himself a minister of God, and in the name of the Lord says: "*I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*": the application was felt by the prisoners and by the nation, all feeling it as consolatory, and perhaps not a few regarding it as prophetic.'

All this is borne out by Burnet, and by Evelyn in his 'Diary.'

It was not long that they continued in durance, but were required to enter into bonds for small sums, to answer to information that day fortnight—that is to say, on June 29, being St. Peter's day. 'The appearance in Westminster Hall,' says Burnet, 'was very solemn, about thirty of the nobility accompanying them as they left their imprisonment. All the streets were full of shoutings the rest of the day, and bonfires at night.'

On the day appointed the trial came on, and was soon decided by a verdict of 'Not Guilty.' It did not last more than ten hours. For a vivid account of it the reader is referred to the pages of Macaulay. Burnet's words are, referring to the great joy of the town and nation, 'There were such shoutings, so long continued, and, as it were, echoed into the city, that all people were struck with it. Every man seemed transported with joy. Bonfires were made all about the streets. And the news going over the nation produced the like rejoicings and bonfires all England over. The king's presence kept the army in some order. But he was no sooner

gone out of the camp than he was followed by an universal shouting, as if it had been a victory obtained.'

Even the chancellor could not stand this, and within a while—as soon, almost, as the University of Oxford refused to elect him as their chancellor—he caused it to be circulated that the king had acted in this matter against his advice.

I should add here that the bonfire in the old town of Shrewsbury, on the arrival of the news, was before the walls, in front of the Severn, and the rector of Hanwood saw the light of it as he passed on his way home by the Brace Meole road, which he chanced to take that evening instead of going home by Radbrook.

It will now be necessary to revert to the period at which the thread of our history was broken off, though my Talking Friend had little to tell of the reign of James II., save and except that it was altogether distasteful to the Protestant views of the good old county and the really loyal old town.

In the year next following, however, there was a matter which greatly distressed all thinking people—especially the old rector of Hanwood—and that was what followed on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV., the 5th October, 1685. It had been originally published by Henry IV. of France in 1598. As is well known the silk manufacture in Spitalfields was of the poor Protestant strangers driven over from France on this occasion. With one of them, the friend of a Walloon, and of a flannel merchant who visited Shrewsbury, Nehemiah Evans became acquainted, and hence originated the frequent conversations on the subject between himself and the rector of Pontesbury. Clean and quite contrary to this good man's views was all cruelty, for it was his daily study

> The lowliest mortal to befriend
> By daily human kindliness.

Morever, he saw that every engine was at work for the restoration of Popery, which he dreaded in his heart of hearts as a persecuting faith. But the following extracts from Evelyn will say all that needs be said on this head :

'1685, Nov. 3.—The French persecution of y^e^ Protestants

raging with the utmost barbarity, exceeded even what y^e^ very heathens used; innumerable persons of the greatest birth and riches leaving all their earthly substance, and hardly escaping with their lives, dispers'd through all the countries of Europe. The French tyrant abrogated the Edict of Nantes which had been made in favor of them, and without any cause; on a sodaine demolishing all their churches, banishing, imprisoning, and sending to the gallies all y^e^ ministers; plundering the common people, and exposing them to all sorts of barbarous usage by souldiers sent to raide and prey on them; taking away their children; forcing people to the Masse, and then executing them as relapsers; they burnt their libraries, pillag'd their goods, eate up their fields and substance, burnt or sent their people to the gallies, and seized on their estates. There had now been number'd to pass through Geneva only (and that by stealth, for all the usuall passages were strictly guarded by sea and by land) 400,000 towards Switzerland. In Holland, Denmark, and all about Germany, were dispers'd some hundred thousands, besides those in England, where, though multitudes of all degrees sought for shelter and wellcome as distress'd Christians and confessors, they found least encouragement by a fatality of the times we were fallen into, and y^e^ uncharitable indifference of such as should have embraced them; and I pray it may not be laid to our charge.'

This he repeats under January 12, 1686; and under May 5, that same year, occurs the very painful passage following:—

'This day was burnt in the Old Exchange, by the common hangman, a translation of a Booke written by y^e^ famous Mons^r^ Claude, relating only matters of fact concerning the horrid massacres and barbarous proceedings of y^e^ French King against his Protestant subjects, without any refutation of any facts therein; so mighty a power and ascendant pen had the French Ambass^r^, who was doubtless in greate indignation at the pious and truly generous charity of all the nation for y^e^ reliefe of those miserable sufferers who came over for shelter.

'About this time also the Duke of Savoy, instigated by

y^e^ French King to extirpate the Protestants of Piedmont, slew many thousands of those innocent people, so that there seemed to be an universal desire to destroy all that would not go to Masse throughout Europe: *quod avertat D.O.M.* No faith in princes.'

We cannot wonder that men's minds in Protestant England should have been in a ferment, and that the old county of Shropshire should have been moved!

The next matter of moment which my Talking Friend recollected was in the year 1687, when James II. spent a day at Shrewsbury. This was whilst he was making a progress through many parts of England, of which Burnet tells us that 'he went from Salisbury all round as far as to Chester,' adding that 'in the places through which the king passed, he saw a visible coldness both in the nobility and gentry, which was not easily borne by a man of his temper. In many places they pretended occasions to go out of their counties. Some stayed at home. And those who waited on the king seemed to do it rather out of duty and respect, than with any cordial affection.'

It is not clear whether this was the case in our county. At all events, Lord Newport, who looked with great uneasiness upon the aggressions on the religion and liberties of the people, had been removed from his lieutenancy in February, 'and not long after it,' say our historians, 'formed one of the splendid *cortège* of peers who attended the bishops to the Court of King's Bench, upon their extraordinary trial.' They did not arrive at the conclusion that he personally absented himself. As for the old town itself, with their will or by their will, they were obliged to acquiesce, for by the existing charter 'the corporation was wholly dependent on the crown.' Accordingly all due preparations were made for the king's reception, and inquiries instituted how he had been received at Gloucester and Worcester on his progress through these cities.

It was on the morning of August 24, 1687, that the king left Ludlow—the old Court of the Marches and residence of the Lord President, of which so much has been said before—and on that same evening arrived at Shrewsbury, and took up

his lodgings at the Council House, where his father, Charles I., lodged in the time of the Great Rebellion. The streets had been *gravelled* before his arrival, the conduits ran with wine, and besides expending 200*l.* on the occasion, the corporation presented him with a purse of gold containing a hundred guineas—an offering which appears strange to us, but which was common enough then.

Nothing particular appears to have occurred at Shrewsbury, except that, as before mentioned, the king touched for the evil on the morning of the 25th, and then proceeded to Whitchurch, which he reached the same night. Evelyn, by the way, mentions the king's touching for the evil as late as November 6, 1688. 'I saw his Majesty touch for the evil, Piten the Jesuit and Warner officiating.' As late as Tuesday, May 8, 1705, Luttrell tells us, 'On Friday last the Queen touched for the evil in the open court-yard at St. James.'

The well-known, but apocryphal anecdote, of the three Strettons—Little Stretton, Church Stretton, and All Stretton ('What, all Strettons?' exclaimed the king)—is said to have occurred at this time. The real name is 'Eald'—that is, 'Old'—so All is the oldest of these three *stratums*, which still retains the appellation of the old Romans, from whence we derive our '*street*.' It was at All Stretton that the king was reported to have called for a glass, and to have drunk of the clear water of the stream which there crossed the road. But it should be added that Mr. Eyton gives a different derivation of 'All,' and supposes it to be a corruption of Alured Stretton.

Of the after movements of the reign of James very little seems to have been known in the valley of the Rea; but the news of the landing of the Prince of Orange at Torbay soon spread, and it appears to have been known in Shrewsbury within nine days at the furthest. Luttrell, indeed, in his Diary, speaks of the *mobile*—a word which had now been introduced some years—as 'up in several counties, as *Shropshire*, Suffolk, &c.,' as early as December 8, which implied, allowing time for tidings to reach him, that they had been on the move much earlier. No doubt the whole country was in a great state of excitement.

As is well known, after contrary winds, the Prince landed at Torquay, November 5, having passed the king's fleet in the Downs. After this a 'new and great storm blew from the west,' as Burnet tells us, and shattered the king's fleet which had pursued them as far as the Isle of Wight, compelling it to put in at Portsmouth. 'This,' he continues, 'was a greater happiness than we were then aware of, for the Lord Dartmouth assured me some time after, that, whatever stories we had heard and believed, either of officers or seamen, he was confident they would have fought very heartily. But, now, by the immediate hand of heaven, we were masters of the sea without a blow. I never found a disposition to superstition in my temper—I was rather inclined to be philosophical upon all occasions—yet I must confess, that this strange ordering of the winds and seasons, just to change as our affairs required it, could not but make a deep impression on me, as well as on all that observed it. Those famous verses of Claudian seemed to be more applicable to the prince than to him they were made on."' He then quotes the verses, leaving out two and a half lines to suit his purpose. What Burnet omitted I have marked in italics:

> O nimium dilecte Deo, *cui fundit ab antris*
> *Æolus armatas hyemes, cui militat æther,*
> *Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.*

For the king's flight, December 11, 1688, and all other particulars, the reader is referred to the pages of Evelyn and Macaulay. The former was present when James returned to Whitehall, and heard a Jesuit say grace when he dined in public. On the 18th he saw the king take barge to Gravesend 'at 12 o'clock—a sad sight!' and afterwards saw the Prince of Orange at St. James's, 'very stately, serious, and reserved,' a statement which he repeats on the proclamation of the new queen and king (*sic*) on the 13th of February, 1689, contrasting his severe presence with the unseemliness of Mary's conduct, 'when she came into Whitehall laughing and jolly as to a wedding, so as to seem quite transported.' Burnet, who objected to her conduct, informs us that her gaiety was put on at the suggestion of the prince, that nobody

might be discouraged at her looks. Probably there was a good deal of nervous excitement about her on the occasion and she over-acted her part—at all events it must have been a very painful sight. It may be added that Evelyn was present at the coronation on April 11.

It should be mentioned here that Burnet gives the substance of two remarkable letters on the subject of religion. The one is to the Princess of Orange from her father; the other, his daughter's reply. It was in this correspondence that James II. said pithily enough, 'He could not see why Dissenters might not separate from the Church of England as well as she had done from the Church of Rome. Nor could the Church of England separate herself from the Catholic Church, any more than a county of England could separate herself from the rest of the kingdom.' But the words contain an easily discovered sophism. The Church of England never did separate from the Catholic, but from the Roman Catholic, Church.

One day, in talking over the latter days of James II.—they were summer or autumn days on which I always visited Shropshire and the old homestead by the Rea-side, and Hanwood—there was a visible and an audible shaking of the leaves in the topmost branches of my Talking Friend, and, from long and pleasant experience, I prepared myself for an oracular communication.

'He was a strange man—a strange old man—was Eddert Hopkins, William Downe's cousin—Welsh uncle some said—and had learned to sing some strange ditty, which no one else ever sang, at the Lea-Cross and at the Cock at Hanwood, but himself; all knew the words, but none knew the meaning, except, perhaps, old Murphy, who groomed the Squire's hunters at Meole. This same Murphy was an Irishman by birth, and said they were Irish words, and gave a long whistle as he enunciated, at the pitch of his voice, and with a peculiar brogue,

Lero, Lero, Lilibulero.

No one sang a better song than Eddert Hopkins, the gardener of the district, well known and acceptable to all his neighbours. But,' continued my Talking Friend, 'in his latter days he

became restless and disquieted, added to which a great and incurable deafness had depressed him much, though he still at times retained a pleasant smile, and his cheeks were ruddy as the roses he loved to cultivate and to present to his much loved mistress at Cruckton. Her name was Charlotte, and he never quite got over her early death—so good was she!

'The old doctor at Silberscott was called in to see him, and prescribed for him, but physic did the old man little good at first, and though sharp and intelligent in his vocation, he, in other ways, showed that the brain was touched, or, at least, the stomach and digestive organs, and he was constantly seeing visions, which I recollect the doctor called by the name of "*phantasmata*," peculiar, I suppose, to the human frame, for, old as I am, I never saw anything of the sort, nor did I ever hear of any Heart of Oak that had seen them.'

And I could not but smile at the remarks of my faithful chronicler and friend, promulgated as they were with his usual strong sense and feeling, for, sooth to say, the venerable oak by the Rea-side

> Wanted not those contentments which arise
> From Christian love, and Christian amities.

But to proceed with the Old Oak's narrative.

'It was ten or twelve years before this that Eddert Hopkins lost his wife, and latterly, amongst other visions, he was disturbed by her appearance, especially by night, when she would not let him lie quiet in his bed. "By Gum, that she wouldn't, and her pulled the clothes off me, and I thought her would 'a' pulled me out of bed quite. It was all I could do to bear it!"

'Clearly, the old man was almost at his wits' end, and so, although he had never been what is called a very regular attendant at his parish church, he bethought him of the unvaried kindness of the old rector of Hanwood'—Nehemiah Evance, before mentioned—'and to him he went, and told him his trouble, adding by the way, that he would have seen him at church had he not been so deaf, which no doubt was in part true, for Eddert was a constant reader of his Bible at home.

'And so, to the good rector he went,' and I may add that no one need be surprised at what follows, for the history of

the 'Sortes Virgilianæ,' and many other superstitious contrivances all look the same way, and show how all men, at times, and in their weaknesses, will seek for divination and enchantments.' In truth, a scripture of very wide acceptation is that which tells of those Cuthite strangers, '*who feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence*'; too much an emblem, said Bishop Wilson, of Christians at this day, 'who undertake to serve God, but at the same time worship every man the idols of his own heart.' Such, however, was not the case with Eddert Hopkins, though, like others many, he saw no harm in his proceedings.

And so, as the Old Oak said, to the rector that was at Hanwood in those days he went in his troubled state of mind, and he laid it all before him with the greatest simplicity of speech, and hid nothing from him, and, in truth, as I heard him say beneath the shadow of my branches, the rector took a great interest in the case. The only difficulty he had to contend with was the old man's deafness, but that he managed to obviate (for Eddert was an excellent scholar) by writing down all he had to say upon a slate, and he liked the slate the better, because it was one he kept in the grapery for his own convenience, and no one understood vines better than Eddert did.

'After some preliminary matters Eddert rushed at once into the subject, told the old rector all his feelings, and ended by saying that he thought he might give him some "words" for the occasion, by which he meant, as I heard the rector put it, a "charm" wherewith to lay the spirit of the old woman. This, of course, was not the rector's view of the subject, but he knew human nature well, and so treated gently the feelings of the perturbed old man, advising him to read certain particular portions of Scripture, to be much in prayer, especially the last thing at night, and on no account to drink any spirits, but to keep himself strictly to his warm pint of beer and the nutmeg toast in it. The latter piece of advice humoured the old man's habits, against which the rector knew it was not worth while contending, as it would have been quite as easy to move the Stiperstones or Ponsert Hill, and the old man

returned to his home with his mind at rest, and was quiescent for a year to come.

'One dark day in November,' continued my Talking Friend, 'Eddert Hopkins again made his appearance in the rector's little parlour, and the ruddiness of his usually fresh cheeks was paled, and a deep cast of melancholy seemed set on the old gardener's face. And he broke out at once and said, "Parson, Parson, she's too bould, too bould; and there's no managing her anyhow. I can't rest in my bed, and I'm quite broken down. What is to be done with her?"

'Evidently, on this occasion, the old man was far from well; and so the rector not only gave him the advice he had done formerly, but exhorted him to take the Communion the following Christmas, at the same time saying the doctor from Silberscott was coming to see him, and he would send him on to his cottage at Arscott. He hated physic, he said, himself, but it was a necessary evil, and he was obliged sometimes to take it. And he advised Eddert to do the same. The discipline had the desired effect, and he got better, and was at the Communion Table at Christmas.

'The last occasion, as far as I ever heard,' said the Old Oak, 'on which Eddert broke the subject to the old rector, he told him that she had again been tormenting him—"bould, over bould for a woman, and almost unmanageable, and indeed, no indeed, he couldna keep her down with the 'Common Prayer,' and so he betook him to the 'Communion Service,'" and read it either to himself or aloud, I forget which, and *that was too strong for her*! "Indeed I always read three or four chapters in the Bible, but that wouldna do, and the happy thought came across me to take to the Communion Service, and after that her was at rest."'

Such was the Old Oak's narrative, but whether Eddert had been a good and a kind husband he did not say, but he added pithily, 'that whilst others were disputing about the Prayer Book and the Mass, he thought Eddert Hopkins turned his knowledge to very fair account.'

Reverting to the flight of James and to the arrival of the Prince of Orange it ought not to be omitted that old Serjeant

Maynard came with the men of the law to salute him. 'He was then,' says Burnet, 'near ninety, and yet he said the liveliest thing that was heard on that occasion. The prince took notice of his great age, and said that he had outlived all the men of the law of his time. He answered he had like to have outlived the law itself if his highness had not come over.' It was he who said to Jeffreys, who probably told him that at his great age he had forgotten his law, 'Yes, Sir George, I have forgotten more than you ever knew.' Swift was not justified in calling him an old rogue. Macaulay gives a juster view of him when he says, 'His abilities, which age had not impaired, and his professional knowledge, which had long overawed Westminster Hall, commanded the ear of the House of Commons.'

The old county was little interested in the after fortunes of James II., who lived in exile till September 6, 1701, and died at St. Germain's, a pensioner of France. He was buried in the Benedictine Monastery at Paris.

And what was the view, within a while, taken of his character?

It has been said that he was personally a better man than Charles, and certainly as Lord High Admiral, with the help of Pepys, he was the making of the Navy. As the scholar of Turenne, he never wanted personal courage. But, in other respects, I do not see that there was much to choose between them. On the question of Romanism there can be no doubt they were both dissemblers, though James, beyond a doubt, held certain tenets, whilst Charles probably held to none. At the same time the people had no faith in any of James's professions about upholding the Church of England. How could they have, when he went in royal state to Mass, and opened negotiations with Innocent XI.; when he claimed 'the power of keeping Romish officers in his service, contrary to the provisions of the Test Act'; when he arrogated to himself that dispensing power which was clean and quite contrary to the prerogative, though acquiesced in by unjust judges whose decision was as hurtful to him 'as the decision of ship-money had been to his father'; when the public profession of Romanism was restored by the king's order, and Benedic-

tines, Augustinians, Franciscans, and Carmelites, settled themselves in the city'; and when, to say no more, he wished to tread the University of Oxford underfoot by the appointment of Antony Farmer to Magdalen College, on which occasion he was rebuked by the honesty of the Fellows in the election of the afterwards excellent Bishop Hough, who on the death of Tenison, refused the primacy—on whose monument, as a boy, I gazed with delight in the cathedral of Worcester? But 'the nation,' says Burnet, 'as well as the University, looked on all this proceeding with a just indignation. It was thought an open piece of robbery and burglary when men, authorised by no legal commission, came and forcibly turned men out of their possession and freehold.'

Such was the man who, if Burnet tells truth, on coming to the throne 'expressed his good opinion of the Church of England, as a friend to monarchy. Therefore, he said, he would defend and maintain the Church, and would preserve the Government in Church and State, as it was established by law.' But the word of the king was to be broken, contrary to the common phrase, 'We have now the word of a king, and a word never yet broken.' And no doubt Speaker Onslow was right when he said that James believed the Protestant religion in this country to 'be the source of faction and rebellion, and what ruined his father. He loved and aimed at absolute power, and believed that nothing could support it but the Catholic Religion, as the Romans call theirs; and this increased his zeal for it, and that zeal increased his disposition to arbitrary power; so that in truth his religion and his politics were partly the cause of each other, and indeed they cannot easily be separated.' Certainly in James II. they never were, except when his fears urged upon him at the last, and when, as Burnet forcibly puts it in his introductory sentences: 'A great king, with strong armies and mighty fleets, a vast treasure and powerful allies, fell all at once; and his whole strength, like a spider's web, was so irrecoverably broken with a touch, that he was never able to retrieve what, for want both of judgment and heart he threw up in a day.' Hume, as it is well known, took a more favourable account of James than is expressed in these pages, looking upon him as

more unfortunate than criminal; but an evident misgiving appears in the concluding sentence of his summary. 'On the whole, allowing the king to have possessed good qualities and good intentions, his conduct serves only, on that very account, as a stronger proof how dangerous it is to allow any prince infected with the Catholic superstition, to wear the crown of these kingdoms.' Very true and emphatic words, as I think.

Accidental circumstances have connected two great names of this reign with the old homestead at Meole: those of Bishop Pearson of Chester, and the Honourable Robert Boyle, so well known for his connection with the Royal Society and with that for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, of both which societies he might almost have been called the founder. The accidental circumstance alluded to is that the folio edition of Pearson on the Creed, printed in 1683, and Boyle's 'Occasional Reflections upon several Subjects; with a Discourse about such kind of Thoughts,' were both numbered amongst the few books in what was called 'The Library.' It was only, however, of late years that they appeared on the shelves, having been found—the copy of Pearson, at least—by the late Rev. Charles Peters, rector of the Second Portion of Pontesbury, in an old lumber room. I quite recollect the circumstance, and his mentioning how valuable a book it was. How Boyle's volume turned up, I do not know, but it was one of the editions published in his own lifetime, and printed in London by Henry Herrigman, in the year 1668. No common name was that of Robert Boyle, the founder of the Boyle Lectures.

Bishop Pearson died in the year 1686, and Burnet speaks of him more honestly than he did of Archbishop Sancroft, when he says that he 'was in all respects the greatest divine of the age; a man of great learning, strong reason, and of a clear judgment. He was a judicious and grave preacher, more instructive than assertive; and a man of a spotless life, and of an excellent temper; his book on the Creed is among the best that our Church has produced. He was not active in his diocese, but too remiss and easy in his episcopal functions; and was a much better divine than a bishop. He was

a speaking instance of what a great man could fall to ; for his memory went from him so entirely that he became a child some years before he died.'

How often has this betided some of greatest intellects, as if to show that their light was but borrowed from Him who is Light of Light, and the Father of Lights! Or, as old Fuller puts it, 'God oftentimes leaves the brightest of men in an eclipse, to show how they do but borrow their lustre from His reflection.'

As for the Honourable Robert Boyle, that eminently good man, his name stood as high as—higher even than—that of his friend Evelyn, and he commanded the respect and love of the careless and dissolute Charles II. It is remarkable that he and the lamented Southey—the value of whose life and writings keeps coming out day by day, despite the reckless indifference of our time—should have given expression to a similar opinion on a most important subject. Charles II. on the Restoration wished Boyle to enter the Church, where he would readily rise to the most elevated position, but he maintained, against his own interests and the wishes of his Sovereign, that he 'could best forward the Church's interests as a layman.' Southey always said this for himself, and did the Church and State some service. Let any one capable of forming sound opinions, read the concluding sentences of 'THE BOOK OF THE CHURCH,' and they will readily couple his name and Robert Boyle's together.

I venture to give the extract following from 'A Discourse touching Occasional Meditations,' which no doubt would have attracted the attention of the 'LAST OF THE OLD SQUIRES,' had he ever lighted upon it in his reading.

'Betwixt the mere stated employments and important occurrences of human life, there usually happen to be interpos'd certain intervals of time, which, though they are wont to be neglected as being singly, or within the compass of one day, inconsiderable, yet in a man's whole life they may amount to no contemptible portion of it. Now, these uncertain Parentheses (if I may so call them), or Interludes, that happen to come between the more solemn passages (whether businesses or recreations), of human life, are wont

to be lost by most men for want of a value for them, and ev'n by good men, for want of skill to preserve them. For though they do not properly despise them, yet they neglect or lose them for want of knowing how to rescue them, or what to do with them. And as the grains of sand and ashes be, apart, but of a despicable smallness, and very easie and liable to be scattered and blown away, yet the skilful Artificer, by a vehement fire, brings numbers of these to afford him that noble substance, Glass, by whose help we may both see ourselves and our blemishes lively represented (as in Looking-glasses); and discern celestial objects (as with Telescopes), and with Sunbeams kindle disposed materials (as with Burning-glasses), so when these little fragments or parcels of time, which, if not carefully lookt to, would be dissipated and lost, come to be managed by a skilful contemplator, and to be improved by celestial fire of devotion, they may be so ordered as to afford us both looking-glasses to dress our souls by, and perspectives to discover heavenly wonders, and incentives to inflame our hearts with charity and zeal. And some goldsmiths and refiners are wont all the year long carefully to save the very sweepings of their shops, because they may contain in them some filings, or dust of those richer metals, gold and silver. I see not why a Christian may not be as careful not to lose the fragments and lesser intervals of a thing incomparably more precious than any metal, Time; especially when the improvement of them, by our Meleteticks, may not only redeem so many portions of our life, but turn them to pious uses, and particularly to the great advantage of Devotion.' Striking words, even if a little far-fetched.

As far as I could make out from my Talking Friend, nothing further, of any telling interest, attached this reign either to the valley of the Rea or to the venerable old town of Shrewsbury, and once more I thanked the good Old Tree for all the information he had so often condescended to give me; for he constantly laid aside the gravity of years to suit my humour, and he was never put out by all sorts of questions which I put to him on summer days, when it must have been so pleasant to him to let the sunbeams sleep in his aged branches, cherishing them with its warmth, and when it must

have been pleasanter to him to hear the buzz of the insects in his outspread lordly boughs :

> Parvæ murmura vocis,
> Qualia de pelagi, si quis procul audiat, undis
> Esse solent.

And I betook me to the stream below, as I had so often done, and saw the trouts strike up the shallows as I had so often done, and I repeated to myself those other lines from the same book, so beloved by schoolboys :

> Labitur occulte fallitque volatilis ætas,
> Et nihil est annis velocius.

It should be added that a great name passed away in the year 1688, no less a person than the celebrated John Bunyan, who was buried in the vault of his friend Strudwick the grocer, in whose house he died.

> The ' Pilgrim's Progress ' now is finished
> And Death hath laid him in this earthly bed.

Such was the simple inscription in the well-known Campo Santo of Bunhill Fields.

CHAPTER XLI.

WILLIAM AND MARY.

Aged woods and floods that know
What hath been long times ago.
GEORGE WITHER, *Faire Virtue, The Mistress of Philarete*, iii. 28.

Have not some by equality of mind,
Even in the crossest course of evil times,
With passive goodness won against the wind?
So Priscus passed Domitian's torrid climes,
And 'scapt from danger to the full of days
Helping frail Rome with unoffending ways.
LORD BROOKE, *Treatise of Monarchie*, Sat. iv. p. 537.

The highest eulogy which can be pronounced upon the Revolution of 1688 is this, that it was our last Revolution. Several generations have now passed away since any wise and patriotic Englishman has meditated resistance to the established Government. In all honest and reflecting minds there is a conviction, daily strengthened by experience, that the means of effecting every improvement which the constitution requires may be found within the constitution itself.—MACAULAY, vol. ii. 662.

Insperata accidunt magis sæpe quam quod speres.
PLAUT. *Mostell.* i. 1. 69.

IT cannot be said that on the accomplishment of this great Revolution, which certainly saved our liberties by a Protestant succession, that—

To shun Charibdis's jaws, they hopeless fell
In Scylla's gulphe.

'On the morning of Wednesday, the thirteenth of February, the court of Whitehall and all the neighbouring streets,' writes Macaulay, 'were filled with gazers. The magnificent Banqueting House, the masterpiece of Inigo, embellished by masterpieces of Rubens had been prepared for a great cere-

mony. The walks were lined by the yeomen of the guard. Near the northern door, on the right hand, a large number of Peers had assembled. On the left were the Commons with their Speaker, attended by the Mace. The southern door opened and the Prince and Princess of Orange, side by side, entered, and took their places under the canopy of state.' Whereupon followed the tender and acceptance of the Crown, which he received like a man who was determined to fulfil his duties faithfully.

Although nothing immediately appertaining to William and Mary concerns the old town of Shrewsbury, or, indeed, the valley of the Rea, yet, from accidental circumstances, a good deal was known at the old homestead of Meole about them, and two old pictures of those sovereigns still remain there, presented by an old friend of the family—a Londoner who was connected with the Drapers' Company, and who made his periodical visits, as many others had done before him, receiving a hearty welcome. Welsh flannel, no doubt, was the original object of all these visits.

It is, however, but a tradition as regards these portraits, nor is it really known how they came to Meole. There, nevertheless, they are, and good ones too, as was admitted by an able connoisseur, but he said at the same time to me that they were not originals, but copies.

My Talking Friend informed me that scarce such a spring was ever known in England as that in which William came to the throne. His leaves were out early, much earlier than usual, and he was ready for his midsummer shoots long before the ordinary time, to which he added that such a crop of acorns had never been known on this side of the county, that the squirrels came down from the Minsterley Woods by scores, and that the very dormice laid up vast stores. It was very unusual for them to come here, but there was no mistaking their little husky bark, so often heard in the Oak's woods.

Evelyn corroborates what the Old Oak said of the genial spring, under April 21. 'This was one of the most seasonable springs, free from the usual sharp east winds, that I have observed since the year 1660 (the year of the Restoration)

which was much such a one.' In these matters my Talking Friend was seldom mistaken ; but as a rule he did not like an early spring, for if there came frosts in May, as was frequently the case, all his early leaves and shoots perished.

Many alarms reached the valley of the Rea from Shrewsbury this year relative to the movements of James II. in Ireland. The people generally were no doubt glad that they had now a Protestant sovereign, but there were some who could not readily acquiesce in the change of dynasty, and hardly knew how conscientiously to discharge their oaths. This was a real and a great difficulty, much greater than appears to us at this distance of time, and, as we know, it was heavily felt by the non-jurist clergy. Meanwhile news came in by what country people call driblets, that James had landed at Kinsale, that he had entered Dublin, and that the siege of Londonderry was formed. This was on April 20, and it was not raised by Colonel Kirk till July 30. The excitement caused at the time by this siege was as great as many results which have followed. It lasted 105 days, and Macaulay calls it 'the most memorable in the annals of the British Isles.'

An Act of the utmost consequence—the Toleration Act—was passed this year on May 24, an Act which resulted in a great liberty to the subject and a greater still to all Dissenters. It was not till 9 George IV. c. 17, May 9, 1828, that the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed, to the great relief of men's consciences, as all would now readily acknowledge.

Of the Battle of the Boyne and of the beauty of its banks nothing was known in the valley of the Rea, nor of William's coolness when wounded on the preceding afternoon. The battle—called by Burnet 'a complete victory'—was fought on July 1, 1690. On his being wounded the king said, 'There's no harm done, but the bullet came quite near enough.' It had, in fact, torn his coat down and grazed his shoulder, but, says Macaulay, 'such was the energy of his spirit, that, in spite of his feeble health, in spite of his recent hurt, he was that day nineteen hours on horseback.' This was like the Iron Duke.

The next year, that of 1691, was memorable for the deprivation of the non-jurors or, as Luttrell calls them in his first entry, the non-swearers. This took place on February 1, and there was a great division throughout the old county on the matter. Generally, and at this time of day, admitting some errors of judgment in some cases—for the best of men are but men at best—we must admit that such good men could be ill-spared. Those who could talk of 'De Witting' such men—a bloody term well known at this time—'could have no faith, no love, no charity, and had the non-jurors been as cruel as themselves, would have met with little forgiveness, but for such they prayed! Macaulay even, however guardedly, attests their goodness.'

Lambeth, of course, was now vacant, and if so good a man as Sancroft must depart, it was fortunate in securing a Tillotson, for, whatever his enemies might say of him, the testimony of his friends has never been disproved. Burnet tells of his 'soft and prudent counsels,' and adds that 'he had large principles, and was free from superstition; his zeal had been chiefly against atheism and popery, but he had never shown much sharpness against the Dissenters. He had lived in a good correspondence with many of them; he had brought several over to the Church by the force of reason and the softness of persuasion and good usage; but was a declared enemy to violence and severity on those heads.' I may add that it is impossible for anyone to read his collected sermons now without good advantage. The style is clear and perspicuous, and his theological knowledge great without ostentation. Such was the man to whom this entry in Luttrell's Diary appertains:—

'May, 1691. The 31st being Whitsunday, Dr. John Tillotson, Lord archbishop of Canterbury, was consecrated in Bow Church in London, by the bishops of Winchester, St. Asaph, Salisbury, Worcester, Bristol, and Oxford, being appointed by commission for that purpose; it was performed with the usual solemnities, at which assisted all the great officers of state, and most of the nobility in town.'

It was in this year that my Talking Friend told of a visit made by old James Cross, of Meole, to London, and how he

got entangled in a fray in which the Templars were concerned, and which he said had something to do with the rights of sanctuary. James had friends in London and visited the great city as late as 1701, for in that year he saw the people cross the Thames above London Bridge by a plank. Both these circumstances are alluded to by Luttrell. His reference to Alsatia still carries some interest with it, and is as follows: 'The benchers of the Inner Temple, having given orders for bricking up their little gate leading into Whitefryers, and their workmen being at work thereon, the Alsatians came and pulled it down as they built it up; whereupon the sherifs were desired to keep the peace, and accordingly came the 4th with their officers; but the Alsatians fell upon them, and knockt several of them down, and shott many guns amongst them, wounded several, two of which are since dead; a Dutch soldier passing by he was shott thro' the neck, and a woman into the mouth; Sir Francis Child himself, one of the sherifs, was knockt down, and part of his gold chain taken away. The fray lasted several hours, but at last the Alsatians were reduced by the help of a body of the king's guards. Divers of the Alsatians were seized and sent to prison.' And thus it is that such matters travel!

In the next year—February 13, 1692—occurred the barbarous Massacre of Glencoe, admitted by Burnet to be 'the greatest blot in this whole reign,' though he framed what excuses he could for the king. But there is no excuse to be made for such a crime, Macaulay even being judge; and it has left a blot on William's name which no time will ever efface. Evidence exists that the Master of Stair did not go beyond the king's orders; the king, however, declined to punish, though as late as 1695 he was pressed by the Scottish Parliament to do so. It may be added that it was a long time before the blackness of the deed became known: but it is mentioned here as it occurred under the present date.

As for my Talking Friend he had never at this time heard of Glencoe, much as he heard of it in after years, and even in recent ones, from a relative of the old homestead of Meole who pursued his studies in Edinburgh. What chiefly

concerned him this year were the floods and the bad prospects of the harvest. As for the Severn, up till Midsummer it was constantly bank-full, and the people about Melverley were quite drowned out, and the whole valley of the Rea was deluged, the great mill-wheels at Meole and Hanwood being washed out by the mill-races. It was evidently a wet season generally, for Luttrell remarks: 'There is a sad account from the divers parts of this kingdom of the lowland and marshes being under water, the grasse and corne being spoiled, and many cattle drowned'; which is corroborated by Burnet: 'The greatest prejudice the French suffered this year was from the season; they had a very bad harvest, and no vintage in the northern parts. We, in England, had great apprehensions of as bad a harvest, from a very cold and wet summer. Great deluges of rain continued till the very time of reaping. But when we were threatened with a famine it pleased God to send such an extraordinary change of the season that we had a very plentiful crop, enough both to serve ourselves and to supply our neighbours, which made us easy at home, and brought in much wealth for that corn which we were able to spare.'

The death of Richard Cromwell, son of the late Protector, was reported about this time, and set many a-thinking of time and change. The old rector of Hanwood heard of it in Shrewsbury from a traveller who had just left Winchester. Oddly enough, he brought with him something which had never been seen before in the old town, called 'Jogolat,' as my Talking Friend said, evidently meaning 'Chocolate,' and from time immemorial in Mexico under the name of 'Chocollate,' being prepared from the cocoa seed. The Spaniards introduced it into Europe in 1520, and 'Chocolate-houses were not uncommon in London at this time, though the name has since been swallowed up in that of "Coffee-houses."' Luttrell mentions a quarrel which occurred 'at the Chocolate-house,' under July 10, 1694, between the Lord Cholmley and Mr. Bertie. Under any circumstances this was the first time it was ever seen in the valley of the Rea, and the Old Oak said it was much liked. Lisander, in the 'Tatler' goes twice a day to the Chocolate-house.

The next year, 1694, is notorious for the establishment of the Bank of England, which received a royal charter, July 27. The originator was the well-known William Paterson, of Darien celebrity. My Talking Friend knew little about it, and there was no money in the valley of the Rea for speculators to play with; but it is mentioned here as a great event. No doubt, the poll-tax of 1692 ended in the funding system, and the foreign wars of William resulted in the National Debt; and the old line of Horace still goes on to tell a homespun truth:

'Quidquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi.'

As for the Old Oak he was much more concerned with the quantities of Delft-ware which at this time were brought by the barges to Shrewsbury, and thence circulated throughout the valley, and which he said was commonly called 'Chana,' or 'Chaney,' evidently a corruption of 'China.' Luttrell retains the word, and mentions, under March 13, that 'three trunks belonging to the late Queen Mary were lately seized in Shoe Lane, in which were *cheney* and other fine things.'

'*Nov.* 21, *Thursday*.—The Archbishop of Canterbury about 4 this afternoon departed this life by a dead palsy at his palace in Lambeth.' So writes Luttrell. Burnet says he was first taken ill at Whitehall. His last broken words were 'He thanked God he was quiet within, and had nothing then to do but to wait for the will of heaven.' He died poor, with not enough to pay his debts, had not the king forced on him his firstfruits. As I once said of dear William Davison, chaplain of Worthing—

If anybody ask where the dead's goods became,
So God me help and Halidam, he died a poor man.

A little over a month and the queen, his great friend, was no more. She died of smallpox, December 28. Burnet pays a high tribute to her memory, and no doubt on the whole a true one; but, however good a woman she may have been, and however good a wife, her conduct to her father was most unseemly.

From the beginning of May the next year—that is 1695—constant reports reached the old county about plots against William's life, said to have been sanctioned by James. With these plots many names were connected, but particularly that of Sir John Fenwick, mentioned by Luttrell as raising disturbances as early as March 11, 168$\frac{8}{9}$. Indeed he says he was apprehended April 24, 1689, but soon released. It is under June 18 this year, 1695, that he adds, 'Last night sir John Fenwick, concerned in the late Jacobite riot in Drury Lane, was seiz'd, and this day examined before the lords justices and admitted to bail.'

What has to be said on what Burnet calls 'Fenwick's business, that unacceptable affair,' in which he was much and unwillingly concerned, may as well be thrown together here. Macaulay calls him 'an indefatigable agitator and conspirator,' and it must be confessed that he was a most reckless Jacobite, though in the well-known paper delivered to the sheriffs on his execution—supposed to have been drawn up by White, the deprived Bishop of Peterborough—he denied the chief charges brought against him. This is the paper objected to by Burnet.

It was on February 27, 1696, that an Association binding the subscribers to preserve William or to avenge his death, was proposed and very generally signed. An Act embodying it was hastily passed, and it was imperative on the holder of any civil or military employment to sign it, insomuch so that the Lord-keeper Somers removed all magistrates from the commission who refused. From Burnet's account there was clearly great opposition offered, but, as just said, the Act was passed. And here our historian tells us, 'It quickly spread through the country, and was read in the "house," i.e. at a meeting of the corporation of Shrewsbury, on the 13th of March, when it was agreed, nem. con., that it should be signed by the members of the house, and tendered to all absent members; and persons were also appointed to tender it to all gentlemen, burgesses, and other inhabitants, &c., &c. Lord Newport had been created Earl of Bradford (11 May, 1694), and by him it was resolved that this Association should be presented to the King.'

So far the old town interested itself in William's concerns at this time, and beyond this my Talking Friend knew nothing.

It was on June 30, 1696, that the first stone of Greenwich Hospital was laid, as a refuge for decayed seamen, which, notwithstanding some abuses incident to time, has done its work well till 1866. The old palace there could not have been turned to better account. The intent seemed to have been first broached after the Battle of La Hogue, and perhaps by Mary. William carried it out as a memorial of her. The reader will find very interesting details in the 'Diary' of Evelyn, who was treasurer. Within two years of his death he makes the entry following; 'I went to Greenwich Hospital, where they had begun to take in wounded and worn-out seamen, who are exceedingly well provided for. The buildings now going on are very magnificent.' This is under June, 170$\frac{4}{5}$. How true are Macaulay's words, 'Few of those who now gaze on the noblest of European hospitals are aware that it is as a memorial of the virtues of the good Queen Mary, of the love and sorrow of William, and of the great victory of La Hogue.'

My Talking Friend had picked up a good deal about Greenwich Hospital, first and last, and took a great interest in what he heard. All that concerned the wooden walls of Old England was very acceptable to his Heart of Oak.

On asking my good old Chronicler about the state of the vale at this time he informed me that the amusements of the people were coarse, and that on their holidays they were given up pretty much to badger and bull baiting, as well as to dog and cock fighting. The badgers were from the Oaks and Minsterley Woods, but many kept what were then called 'Mains of Cocks' in the valley, and, sad it is to say, 'Mains of Cocks' have been kept there within the present century. Oddly enough, in Luttrell's 'Diary,' so often quoted for this reign, the passage following occurs under this year, showing that it was not the 'natives' and the lower orders only who partook in so cruel a sport. '*June* 4.—A great cock match is now fighting at Oxford betwixt the London and *Shropshire* gamesters, when will be 20 matches at 10 guineas each, and

one at 100.' They had better have followed William's example, who, on October 10, 'went to Richmond to shoot flying, the mention of which shows that it was by no means common in those days. Few indeed were there in Shropshire who shot flying half a century later. Somewhere about 1790 old John Warter of Meole shot woodcocks in the Vesson's Coppice till his barrels were hot. He fell upon a flight just lighted and killed them.

It was in this year, said my Talking Friend, that old John Altree the whitesmith, being in Wolverhampton on matters of his craft, witnessed a great fire there 'which burnt most part of that town.' This was in September, and is one of the many mixed circumstances mentioned in Luttrell's 'Diary.'

The only matter of 1697 of which any note was taken in these parts was that of the Treaty of Ryswick, 'a home of the kings,' as Burnet tells us, 'between the Hague and Delft.' Negotiations were opened early in the year, but it was late before they were concluded, and not at all to the satisfaction of the people, for although Louis now acknowledged William to be king, which he had never done before, it resulted in his betraying the interests of the French Protestants, who had suffered so patiently and so long. Burnet apologises, but William cannot be excused any more than he can for the Massacre of Glencoe, for it was but State policy. Evelyn speaks guardedly enough. '2 *Dec.*—Thanksgiving day for the peace. The King and a great courte at Whitehall. The Bishop of Salisbury preached, or rather made a florid panegyric, on 2 Chron. ix. 7, 8. The evening concluded with fireworks and illuminations of great expence.' It was the first time St. Paul's had had service performed in it since it was burnt in 1666.

The results of this treaty were altogether unsatisfactory, and the debates in Parliament which followed, this year and the next, relative to a 'standing army—an odious sound in English ears'—to use the words of Burnet—gave great umbrage to William, who said to the bishop, 'that if he could have imagined that after all the service he should have done to the nation, he should have met with such returns, he would

never have meddled in our affairs; that he was weary of governing a nation that was so jealous as to lay itself open to an enemy rather than trust him, who had acted so faithfully during his whole life, that he had never once deceived those who had trusted him. He said this, with a great deal more to the same purpose, to myself, but he saw the necessity of submitting to that which could not be helped.'

Whether William was right or wrong, Lord Brooke's lines are true—

> Man's error having framed his mind and sense
> So divers, as no real works long please,
> Is justly scourged by that Omnipotence
> Which never in itself lets vice find ease:
> Whence the vicissitudes of peace and war
> Power's punishments, as well as glories, are.'

The beginning of 1698 is remarkable for the visit of the Czar of Muscovy, commonly called Peter the Great. It created a great talk throughout the country, and was a matter perfectly well known throughout the valley of the Rea. In truth, when the Old Oak heard of his propensity for ship-building, and how he worked with his own hands at Deptford, half savage and Tartar as he was, he could not help having a sort of admiration for him. Charles Cross had been again in London, paying one of his periodical visits, and he reported on his return how the people said that he was 'mechanically turned, and seemed designed by nature rather to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince,' almost the very words of Burnet, whom he told with his own mouth that 'he designed a great fleet at Azuph, and with it to attack the Turkish Empire,' thus frustrating in thought so long before, the expedition to the Crimea and the horrors of Sebastopol. Burnet's account, on the whole, is a striking one, and being commanded by the king to wait upon the Czar, he had the best opportunity of forming an opinion. From Luttrell's 'Diary' he appears to have arrived on January 10. 'He came not to be seen,' he adds, 'and when he came out of Admiral Mitchell's ship which brought him over, he caused all the seamen to go under the deck.' Altogether this is in character with an Oriental despot! William knew his man, and humoured him, and the two

visited each other privately. Macaulay, as usual, has painted the Czar's visit in vivid colours, telling us how he did at Deptford what he had done at Amsterdam, quietly subverting also the remark of Burnet by saying, 'This large mind, equal to the highest duties of the general and the statesman contracted itself to the most minute details of naval architecture, and naval discipline.' And so we find the Czar of Muscovy at Deptford.

Of the melancholy Darien scheme of 1698, forwarded by the well-known William Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England; of the villages in Bengal on the Hooghly, where Calcutta now stands, which were purchased by the East India Company; and of Fort William built there after the name of the king, nothing was known in the valley of Rea.

Much more was known, and deservedly, of that exemplary man Thomas Bray, born at Marton in Shropshire, in the year 1656, and who died in 1730. He it was who first established those parochial libraries, so many of which still remain, and who perseveringly followed up the interest of our two great Church Societies, for Promoting Christian Knowledge and for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The following extract is from the 'Annals of England,' and is a proper tribute to so honoured a name.

'A corporation "for the promoting and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England" was established by an Act of Parliament under the Commonwealth (cap. 45 of 1649), which was allowed to exist after the Restoration, and numbered among its patrons the Hon. Robert Boyle. The societies mentioned in the text, however, were mainly the result of the unwearied labour of Dr. Thomas Bray (born in Shropshire in 1656, educated at Hart Hall, Oxford, and died 1730), a man of indefatigable energy, unbounded charity, and exemplary life. Besides passing over to Maryland to establish the Church there, he laboured at home to prepare missionaries for the colonies, gave great help in the establishment of parish libraries and charity schools, and was one of the earliest of the benevolent men who have devoted their attention to alleviate the condition of debtors and other prisoners.'

Such was the man whom Bishop Compton chose as his

commissary for settling the affairs of the Church in Maryland, whither he sailed in 1699; such was the man whom the Old Oak had frequently seen in his early days, staff in hand, and full of curious talk, trudging his way down from Marton to Shrewsbury, to consult with the clergy there, calling on the rectors of Pontesbury and Hanwood by the way. But this was in his early years. His latter days, as is well known, were spent at St. Botolph's, Aldgate, where he lived beloved, and died lamented.

So mayst thou duly learn
The intercessor's part;
Thy prayers and tears may earn
For fallen souls some healing breath
Ere they have died the Apostate's death!

I do not find from my Talking Friend that he recollected much more about the reign of William. Of Dryden's death and funeral, May 13, 1700, of the death of the Duke of Gloucester, July 30, the same year, and of John Argil's wild notions of immortality, nothing was known in the valley. Sooth to say the people then were more concerned with the seasons—with the hay and the corn harvests—with the small concerns of everyday life, and the floods in the Rea. And thus, whilst great events might be going on in the great world the natives were happy and contented in their little circle, and the nation knew few happier spots. One that had read the 'Mistress Philarete' of George Wither might have used those lines of his, as he beheld a contented people whose ambition was as small as their wants, and whose local knowledge hardly reached beyond Shrewsbury and Montgomery.

Seek to raise your titles higher,
They are toys not worth my sorrow;
Those that we to-day admire
Prove the ages' scorn to-morrow.
Take your honours; let me find
Virtue in a free-born mind,
This the greatest kings that be,
Cannot give or take from me.

One name there was which greatly interested my Talking Friend about this time, a name indeed of which the Old Town

and the whole county had reason to be proud. At first I hardly recognised whom he meant, for he constantly called him 'BEND THE BOW.' All at once it flashed across my mind that it must be the well-known Admiral Benbow, as it turned out to be. But the Old Oak never altered his nomenclature, and in all our conversations he has perseveringly called him 'BEND THE BOW,' as Luttrell in his 'Diary' calls him 'BEMBO.'

As all old Shrewsbury boys took a great interest in the adventures of this celebrated sailor, always pointing out his home to new comers on their way to Cotton Hill, a short history of his life will be expected here. Indeed, my Talking Friend would be no longer my true and faithful chronicler, if I were to pass this Heart of Oak sailor by. Benbow had friends, he told me, at Cruckton amongst the Hosier family, and the whole valley rung with his praises, from Coleham to Caux Castle. The life of Benbow runs on into the next reign, but all particulars will be given here.

ADMIRAL BENBOW.

Well, noble minds in perils best appear,
And boldest hearts in bale will never flinne.
GASCOIGNE'S *Voyage in Holland*, an. 1572.

Conceive him now in a man-of-war, with his letters of merit, well-armed, victualled, and appointed, see how he acquits himself.—FULLER'S *Holy State*, 'The Good Sea Captain,' Book II. c. xxi.

As may be seen from the register of St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, the name was variously spelt—Benbo, Benboe, and Bendbow, so that the Old Oak was not far wide of the mark when he called our future admiral Bend the Bow. Moreover, as his father, William, was a tanner of Shrewsbury, he probably had dealings at the well-known tanpits of Pontesford, which will account for the names being so widely circulated in the valley.

It is believed that the account given by Dr. Campbell in the 'Biographica Britannica' is incorrect; and although the meeting of Charles II. and of old Colonel Thomas Benbow in the Tower, when the king saluted him as his 'old friend of

Worcester fight,' is pleasant as a story, it can scarcely be received as a fact. Indeed, it seems clearly proved that his father's name was William ; and, as we have seen in an earlier page of our history of the Valley of the Rea, it was Captain John Benbow who was shot at Shrewsbury, and he, it is equally clear, was the uncle of the admiral. Such is the result of the careful investigation of our valuable historians.

Our naval hero, the hero of all old Shrewsbury boys (for although Rodney's Pillar is on the Breidden, they seemed to know more of Benbow than of him, or indeed of anyone except Lord Hill in later years), appears to have been the youngest of three children, his two sisters, Margaret and Eleanor, being older than himself. The date of his birth is not exactly known, but is clearly subsequent to May 1648, because his father—William, the worthy tanner and burgess—had at this time no other issue than the two daughters whose names have just been mentioned.

Constant references are made to Benbow in Luttrell's 'Diary,' and he was evidently one of the greatest heroes of his day, though no courtier, but rough and ready, albeit little in form, slight in figure, and mild of feature.

Nothing is known of his earlier years, except that he was engaged in the merchant service, and that he there became a man of mark and property, for he is said to have equipped some of the best vessels in the Mediterranean trade, of which he commanded in person the 'Malaga Merchant' and the 'Benbow Frigate.' It was whilst he was in the latter that the attack was made upon him by the 'Sallee Rover,' from which originated (supposing it true), the story of the negroes' heads. It is told in different ways, but the pith of it is as follows. On his way to Cadiz he was pursued, and attacked and boarded by the corsairs, but he contrived to beat them off his ship, and they lost thirty-six men in the death struggle. The heads of these he cut off and threw them into a tub of brine or pickle, and pursued his way to Cadiz. On his arrival there he and his *todito*, or Moorish servant, Cæsar, landed with them in a sack, and on being challenged by the custom-house officers, as though he were importing contraband goods, he told them 'they were salt provisions for his own use.' The reply was

not considered satisfactory, and the officers referred him to the superior authorities, who civilly came to the conclusion that the sack must be inspected. Upon this, with the waggery and the bluntness of the sailor combined, he bade Cæsar empty out the sacks' contents, saying, 'Gentlemen, if you like them, they are at your service!' Upon this he told his story to the authorities, to their surprise and admiration of the feat. The story goes on to say that the anecdote so pleased the King of Spain that he recommended Benbow to King James, which led to his promotion in the Royal Navy.

Some doubts have been expressed as to the truth of this story, but 'a relic,' say our historians, 'in the possession of the admiral's existing relations affords it considerable countenance. This is a kind of cup or punch-bowl, edged with silver, on which is engraved, "*The First Adventure of Captain John Benbo, and left to Richard Rodney*, 1687." On close inspection it appears to consist of fibres of cane very closely matted together, and coated on both sides with varnish. The vessel has been handed down in the family by the name of a *skull-cap*; and it evidently appears to be such a covering for the head as is in use among the Moors; so that it may have been worn by one of the thirteen pirates who lost their lives on board the Benbow Frigate.' It is now in the possession of one of his descendants.

Benbow is reported to have received his first commission as the captain of the 'York' in 1689, and in the next year to have been engaged by the Earl of Torrington, who appears to have been much dissatisfied with his position, to assist him in his labours. It is also reported—but I do not see it mentioned in Luttrell—that he was present at the defeat off Beachey Head, when the English and Dutch fleets were punished by the French, June 30, or, as Luttrell puts it, 'on Monday, July 1, about nine in the morning off Beachey.'

In 1693 he was engaged in the well-known bombardment of St. Malo, which Luttrell thus reports under November 9:—'Last night came an express to the Admiralty office, with advice that Captain Bembo, Engineer Phillips, and Captain Silver, with the expedition squadron, had burnt near thirty

privateers at St. Maloe's, with many merchant ships and transport vessels ; and by their bombs had burnt a great part of the town, which was on fire in divers places.' It was on this occasion that the explosion vessel which the sailors called the 'Infernal' did so much damage, though somewhat of a failure. The next great bombardment of that nest of privateers, which of all others had most infested the Channel and molested our merchants, was in July 1695, and on July 18 Luttrell informs us that the lords justices gave Captain Phillips 100*l.* for purging the road of it. On this occasion Colonel Richards and Captain Benbow had the direction of the bomb ketches—which again were something of a failure, though hardly considered so. After this, in the operations against Dunkirk and Calais, he acted under the directions of Sir Cloudesley Shovel. He was wounded in the leg at Calais, and on his return home was promoted to be Rear-Admiral of the Fleet. His great trouble, before the Treaty of Ryswick, was to have missed an engagement with Bart, that *marin célèbre*, whose name is still held in honour. And it is remarkable that Bart, like Benbow, was taken out of the merchant service into the navy. As William raised the one, so Louis XIV. raised the other to be his *chef d'escadre*. The king was once reported to have said to him once at Court, 'Je voudrois avoir dix mille hommes comme vous'; to which in his plain sailor way he only replied, 'Je le crois bien.' Thus far these two great sailors are alike. No doubt it was a great disappointment to Benbow that Bart should have escaped the blockading force as he did, in a fog, and have afterwards made so many captures of the Dutch! Luttrell's words are, 'Captain Benbow, who lay with a squadron before Dunkirk, having lett Du Bart slip out in the night with his squadron, is gone northward in pursuit of him.'

The 'Diary' so often referred to tells us that 'Admiral Benbow'—this is under August 6th, 1696—'is ordered to convoy home the Hamborough fleet, which having successfully arrived, he is, under the 11th, ordered to meet and convoy home the fleet coming from Muscovy.' After this, under September 10th, he sails with his squadron for Holland, with some of the king's yachts.

In the year following, under April 13, we are informed that 'Admiral Benbow with eight men-of-war, is sayled from Spithead to meet our Virginia fleet, and clear the western coast of French privateers'; but by May 20 he is back again at Spithead 'for want of provisions.' Under May 27 we find him off again, 'with a squadron of men-of-war and a fire-ship to convoy three outward-bound East India ships part of their voyage, and wait the arrival of our homeward bound Virginia fleet.' In October, on Sir Cloudesley Shovel being appointed to convoy his majesty home, he had the command of the winter squadron. Under July 7, the year following (that is, 1698), he is put in command, as rear admiral, of the squadron which is to take the king to Holland. Under August 12, 1699, we find that he is with the squadron of his majesty's ships in the West Indies—had been 'on the coast of Darien, but refused entrance by the Juts into their harbour.' Subsequently he obtained restitution of several English vessels from the Spaniards which had been seized by them in retaliation for that settlement. We find him returned by July 2, 1700, bringing with him nine pirates of Avery's crew.

Under August 26, 1701, we find him departing on his last glorious mission, 'Brigadier-general Selwin,' says Luttrell, 'is gone to embark on board Admiral Benbow, to take upon him the government of Jamaica.'

It is upon this appointment that the well-known interview with the king is said to have taken place—apocryphal or not, I cannot say. It would appear that William was unwilling to send Benbow again to so sickly a station, and first one name and then another was suggested, but none which met with his approval. 'No,' said he, 'they won't do; these are all fresh-water *beaux*; the service requiring a *beau* of another sort, honest Ben*bow* must go, after all.' He was accordingly sent for, and his reply to his sovereign, who gave him the option of going or stopping at home, is pretty much what the Duke of Wellington would have made in our days—'He knew no difference of climates, nor thought an officer had any right to choose his station, and that at all times he was most ready and willing to proceed to any part of the world to which

his majesty thought proper to send him;' the worthy reply of a brave tar, and in character with Homer's line:—

Εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος, ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.

And he hoisted his flag on board the 'Breda,' and on November 3 reached Barbadoes, and perchance may have looked on Edward Spurstow's grave, and inquired who he was. Nothing would have pleased a British tar more than the romantic story of Mary Buckingham.

Under Tuesday, December 9, this same year, Luttrell informs us, 'The lords of the admiralty have ordered, by his majesty's command, a swift sailing ship to be got ready forthwith, to carry a pacquet with new instructions to Admiral Benbow.' What these were is not stated, but, no doubt, they referred to the fresh war with France. Under February 28 he states, 'Our merchants have advice that Admiral Benbow was going from Jamaica to cruise on the coast of the Spanish West Indies. The 13 men-of-war designed for reinforcing him are now ready to sail home.' In the middle of May, 1702, Admiral Whetstone arrived with reinforcements.

All else that we know of the gallant admiral is summed up in his last engagement, and that desperate fight in which he was so cruelly deserted. It was on July 11 that he and his squadron weighed from Port Royal, to join Admiral Whetstone in pursuit of Du Casse. It appears they did not meet, but on August 19 he came up with the vessels he was in search of close to Saint Martha. With his usual tactics, he wished to close with the enemy, and pour in his broadside, but, owing to the tardy movements of his ships, he failed to do so, and the French were enabled to open their fire first. The consequence was he was obliged to engage before he wished, when, to his horror and amazement, as tarnishing the honour of the British flag, the 'Defiance' (Captain Richard Kirkby) and the 'Windsor' (Captain John Constable) after receiving two or three broadsides hauled dead to the wind and withdrew. And thus the French were enabled to rake the 'Breda' with a murderous fire, which continued till nightfall; and so they separated till the morning.

The next day, August 20, Benbow determined himself to lead

on either tack, and was supported by his faithful captain, George Walton, of the 'Ruby,' but although they pursued Du Casse he did not fire upon them—for whatever reason—whilst, to Benbow's great indignation, his remaining ships kept astern. On the 21st he attacked the rear of the enemy, and fought nobly, but the 'Ruby' was so much shattered as to be obliged to be towed away. All this while, however, the 'Defiance' and the 'Windsor' never fired a shot, though they were well up on the beam of the sternmost ship of the French line. This was reached by Benbow early on the morning of the 24th, who at once opened his determined fire, which was as resolutely returned, and a chain shot shattered his right leg. Again, as before, though one of the largest of the French ships lay like a wreck upon the water, he was only assisted by the 'Falmouth' (Captain S. Vincent)—the 'Greenwich,' the 'Defiance,' the 'Windsor,' and the 'Pendennis' only firing a few shots. This emboldened the French, and they, in turn, became the attacking force, and all but disabled the 'Breda,' with the wounded admiral on board, who, nevertheless, like another Nelson, still kept his signal for close action night and day waving in the wind.

It was on this occasion that Benbow did what only a British tar would do, and which, no doubt, must vastly have delighted so generous a foe as Du Casse: he ordered his flag captain to fire two shotted guns into those ships of his own which had so disgracefully deserted him in the hour of need. No wonder that Shrewsbury boys said—for this is what makes a constant impression—

O rare Admiral Benbow!

How often have we said it as we passed his house, and how little, at that time, did we know of his bravery, of Saint Martha or Carthagena, where the French betook themselves with their disabled ship. Poor dear old Bishop Butler always impressed upon us the value of geography, but we did not listen much to him, and called him, pleasantly, 'The Venerable'—he, at that time, being an archdeacon, and wearing a little apron, which we made great game of. One amongst us, who knew more geography than all the rest—a dear old boy, still

living—and afterwards a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, we called 'Strabo the Geographer'! But none of these boys would have deserted their colours. All would have fought for bluff old Benbow the admiral—or for dear old Butler.

The rest of the story is well known, how the 'Breda' was refitted for action, how the brave fellow was brought on deck in his 'cradle' from the cockpit, how he despatched a message to the dastardly captains, bidding them try to retrieve their honour, and the honour of the British flag. But, before he could execute his wishes Captain Kirkby of the 'Defiance' came on board the 'Breda,' stating that all had been done that could be done, and that they were no match for the enemy's superior force. How the admiral must have longed to chuck him overboard!

However, he thought it his duty to summon by signal the rest of the captains, and, as they all sided unanimously with the captain of the 'Defiance,' suffering as he was, but more mentally than bodily, he thought it necessary to abide by their counsel, and ordered sail to be made for Port Royal, where he was soon afterwards joined by Admiral Whetstone. On October 6 he ordered Whetstone to convene a courtmartial for the trial of Captains Kirkby, Constable, Wade, and Hudson, for cowardice, breach of orders, and neglect of duty. Kirkby and Wade were clearly convicted on the plainest evidence, and received sentence to be shot, on receiving his majesty's sanction. Constable was acquitted of cowardice, but found guilty of other charges, and was dismissed the service, being imprisoned during his majesty's pleasure. Hudson died a few days previous to his trial, and so escaped. On the 12th Captain Vincent, and Fogg, the admiral's flag captain, were tried for signing a paper, at the instigation of Kirkby, 'not to fight the French.' The charge was not denied, but they said they were induced to sign it, lest Kirkby should desert to the enemy. This carried little weight, but as the admiral bore testimony to their gallantry in action, they were, for the time being, suspended. The spring following Kirkby and Wade were sent to England prisoners on board the 'Bristol.' They arrived at Plymouth on April 4, and were

shot on board the 'Bristol' on the 6th—too good an end for such cowards!

As for bluff and bold Admiral Benbow, his bodily pain was aggravated by the disgrace that had tarnished the British flag, and it was soon decided at Port Royal that the shattered leg must be amputated. Inflammation and fever supervened and he died on November 4, 1702, grieving over the misconduct of his captains to the last, and lamenting their disgrace.

Thus fell Admiral Benbow, a person of great temperance and great courage, an honour to the old town, and a pet hero of all old Shrewsbury boys down to the days of Lord Hill. Like his rival, Bart, he was not, perhaps, conciliatory, or supple and soft of speech, but his was the nature out of which great heroes are moulded, and his country's honour was always safe in his hands. The reader will find what follows in a note in Smollett, and it will speak for itself, whether Du Casse's letter be authentic or no:

'When one of his lieutenants expressed his sorrow for the loss of the Admiral's leg, "I am sorry for it too," replied the gallant Benbow, "but I had rather have lost them both than have seen this dishonour brought upon the English nation. But, do you hear? If another shot should take me off, behave like brave men, and fight it out."' When Du Casse arrived at Carthagena he wrote a letter to Benbow to this effect:

'SIR,—I had little hope on Monday last but to have supped in your cabin: but it pleased God to order it otherwise. I am thankful for it. As for those cowardly captains, who deserted you, hang them up, for, by God! they deserve it.

Yours,
DU CASSE.'

Besides the portrait of the admiral above-mentioned, there is one in the Newsroom at Shrewsbury, but little is known of his connection with his native town. As our historians report:—'Of the admiral's intercourse with his native town we have but little to relate. There is a traditional tale of his once coming to Shrewsbury after a very long absence, and not being recognised by his sister Hind, who

kept a coffee-house in the River Street, till he made himself known to her. When he rose to distinction, he testified his affection to St. Mary's parish by an annual donation to its poor ; and in 1694, being then called *Captain Benbow*, he contributed 10*s.* towards the bells and chimes.'

It may be mentioned in conclusion that of his two sons, John and William, one was second mate in an East Indiaman and the other a clerk in the Navy Office. Over the door leading into the vestry of St. Mary's Church is a monument of the admiral, in white marble, erected by public subscription. It will be recollected that he was a native of this parish. He is not inaptly described as 'the Nelson of his times.'

As before stated, my Talking Friend knew nothing more of the reign of William, nor was anything more known of him in the valley. Somewhat like he was, it is said, in shape and countenance and with his spare figure and aquiline nose, to his brave admiral, a summary of whose history I have just given. He died March 8, 1702, and was buried at Westminster, April 12.

He was quite aware of his state, and had previously said to the Earl of Albermarle on his return from Holland, 'Je tire vers ma fin.' The Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop Burnet were with him till he breathed his last. 'He was often,' says the latter, 'looking up to heaven, in many short ejaculations ; between seven and eight the rattle began, the commendatory prayer was said for him, and as it ended he died, in the fifty-second year of his age, having reigned thirteen years and a few days.

It cannot be said, great as he was in arms, even admitting his failures such as Steenkirke and Landen, that William was ever what might be called popular in England. The well-known phrase '*I'd be a Dutchman else*,' which originated in his reign, shows the contrary. But, if he was not the great idol Macaulay would make him, he was, nevertheless, a very great man, though a very ambitious one. The blots in his character have been alluded to before, such as the Massacre of Glencoe, and his desertion of the French Protestants, both of which implied a want of honourable and upright principle,

notwithstanding the special pleading of Burnet as regards the latter. At the same time one could not receive such an invidious summary of his character as Smollett has drawn up. 'William was a fatalist in religion, indefatigable in war, enterprising in politics, dead to all the warm and generous emotions of the human heart, a cold relation, an indifferent husband, a disagreeable man, an ungracious prince, and an imperious sovereign.' True enough he entailed upon the nation a growing debt, and other political ills, but he was a much greater man, and a better man, too, than is implied in in the above description. *Exceptis excipiendis*, I should not be disinclined to accept this extract from Luttrell's 'Diary,' certainly at the time—that is, under April 2, 1692. The following is given as a character of King William: 'Great without pride, true to his word, wise in his deliberation, secret in his councils, generous in his attempts, undaunted in dangers, valiant without cruelty, and unchanged under all events; he loves justice with moderation, government without tyranny, religion without persecution, and devotion without hypocrisy.'

It is a question if William ever thoroughly understood the English character, though he estimated their bravery well when he cried out in the tug of battle, 'See how my English fight! see how my English fight!' No doubt it is a hard character, more especially for a foreigner, to read aright. Wordsworth is just to him.

WILLIAM THE THIRD.

Calm as an undercurrent, strong to draw
Millions of waves into itself, and run
From sea to sea, impervious to the sun
And ploughing storm, the spirit of Nassau
(By constant impulse of religious awe
Swayed, and thereby enabled to contend
With the wide world's commotions) from its end
Swerves not, diverted by a carnal law.
Had mortal action e'er a nobler scope?
The hero comes to liberate, not defy;
And, while he marched on with righteous hope,
Conqueror beloved! expected anxiously!
The vacillating bondman of the Pope
Shrinks from the verdict of his steadfast eye.

CHAPTER XLII.

GOOD QUEEN ANNE.

In the trait of honesty
Which ever in the end we see succeed,
Though oft it may have interrupted been
Both by the times and man's iniquity.

DANIEL, *To the Lord Henry Howard*, *Brit. Poets*, p. 582.

As in the hush of eve, a sudden wind
Thrills through a grove and bows the crest of pines,
So crept a murmured hum
Thro' the grave banquet, and plumed heads bent downward.

Till hushed each whisper and upraised each eye,
As from a door behind the royal daïs
Into the conclave came,
The priest Teleutias leading the king's daughter!

BULWER'S *Last Tales of Miletus*, 'The Secret Way,' p. 38.

ANNE, Princess of Denmark, succeeded to the throne on March 8, 1702, in the thirty-eighth year of her age. She had married George, son of Frederick III. King of Denmark. The loss of their son, Prince George—he died July 29, 1700, aged eleven years—was her heavy sorrow. Under the date of March 12, Luttrell tells us, 'Yesterday the Queen came to the House of Peers and made a speech to Parliament, which is printed. The Earl of Marlborough carried the sword before her, and his lady accompanied Her Majesty in the coach.' Like our own gracious Queen, VICTORIA, she had, Burnet tells us, a musical voice, and pronounced her first speech 'with a softness of voice and sweetness in the pronunciation that added much life to all she spoke.'

The valley of the Rea, however, was little interested in the succession.

Meanwhile, upon inquiry, my Talking Friend told me that a good and simple-minded old clergyman still lived at Hanwood, or, as a Saxon would have called it, 'Hean,' or Highwood, the upper portion of the parish being, even at this time, forest. And, probably, this old man (Evance, or another, I cannot say) was the last of a very worthy race of men. In later years I know nothing so like the account I have picked up in friendly converse with the Old Oak, as the account given by Charles Boner in his 'Transylvania' of the Saxon clergyman's home at Hammersdorf:

'At Hammersdorf I for the first time visited a Saxon village, and became acquainted with a Saxon clergyman. In his time there was the homely arrangement that one would find in the dwelling of a substantial farmer in the South of England – everything simple, neat, and orderly, very plain, and without the least pretension. The pastor's wife soon brought in a plate of honey-comb—but such honey-comb!—cakes, bread, grapes, and wine. "One must not leave a Saxon clergyman's home without some refreshment," said our host, on my remonstrating about the abundance of good things offered; and, in truth, it was all very enjoyable. Honey like that of Transylvania I have never yet tasted—so pellucid and aromatic, so flowing, too, and delicately flavoured. This was indeed food for the fairies. The cells were of the finest consistence, the waxen walls being as transparent as the luscious amber drops within. Both here and in the other Protestant villages I was struck by the relations—that of a tried and valued friend—in which the clergyman and his parishioners stood to each other. In his manner was genuine kindness, in theirs perfect confidence. They showed him the deference due to a higher teacher and man of education, but withal there was—not familiarity, for that implied something else—but the tone of intimacy which esteem and long acquaintance will give, and which is most pleasant and gratifying to hear.'

I may add here as by the by, that in speaking of the Wallachs of Transylvania—the original dwellers who call themselves Rouman, i.e. Roman, as opposed to Wallachian, who is but an inhabitant of the country—Mr. Boner makes a remark which my time-honoured Old Friend readily

assented to, for he thought (as Lucan thought when he said of the wood by Marseilles which Cæsar cut down, 'Arboribus suus horror inest'), that persons were making too much havoc amongst the woods between Hanwood, Meole, Pontesbury, Minsterley, and the Stiperstones, and though he admitted there might be too much forest (as in the days of his venerable father), he was sure there might be wanton waste of good and useful timber. Mr. Boner's words are:—

'It is a striking feature in all democratic minds, that they have no respect for forests. It may arise from their want of veneration for what is the growth of centuries; but, be it as it may, we find the fact showing itself in popular movements, as well as in individuals, whose political bias is anti-conservative. I have never known such a one who loved a wood. A positive dislike to, a bent to annihilate, all and every forest is strongly marked in the Wallach of Transylvania. And his political creed is communistic.'

The Old Oak's ideas had a turn this way, but he had sense and experience enough to know that if much of the valley had not been disforested, between his own locality on the Rea Ford and the Stiperstones (one of the Royal forests, as several times before mentioned), agriculture could never have progressed as it has done, neither would the Harrisals, the Bossels, and the Cruckton Meadows, or the Hanwood Quarters have rejoiced in the kine which crop their luxuriant herbage.

Entertaining such dark views as these on forest matters and the woods of the country, it is not to be wondered at that my Talking Friend well remembered the great storm of November 26 and 27, 1703. 'About the end of November,' says Burnet, 'the weather grew very boisterous, and broke out on the 27th of November in the most violent storm, both by sea and land, that has been known in the memory of man. The City of London was so shaken by it that people were generally afraid of being buried in the ruins of their houses: some houses fell, and crushed their masters to death; great hurt was done in the southern parts of England; little happening in the North, where the storm was not so violent. There was a great fall of trees, chiefly of elms, that were

blown down by the wind.' This was natural enough, as the elm is not a deep-rooted tree at all. And it may be noted here that most of the great elms which remain till now throughout the country, were planted to fill up the gaps made by this storm.

What Burnet says is true, that it was not so violent in the North, but it reached the Midland counties to the valley of the Rea, for my Talking Friend told me that it tried his Heart of Oak and shook him to the roots, and levelled thousands of trees throughout the country; and he likewise noted that it was many years before the squirrels were as abundant as they had been in those parts before. All the district had been a great haunt of these beautiful creatures. It may be added that Luttrell alludes to the damage in these parts under '*Saturday*, *December* 4.—Vast damages have been done by the late storm in South Wales, particularly the lower parts of Monmouthshire, where the Severn banks were washed down by the overflowing of the sea, some thousand acres laid under water, and a great number of cattle drowned.' He reports that the storm commenced at one o'clock in the morning, continuing till past seven, so terrible that 'the like was not known in the memory of man'; and mentions how the Lady Nicholas and a great many people were killed and wounded —boats and barges forced ashore, and divers of the great trees in St. James's Park, Temple, and Grays' Inn, too, blown down. It is well known that Kidder, 'Bishop of Bath and Wells, and his lady, were killed by the fall of a stack of chimneys at Wells.'

Pepys died May 26, in this year, so that we lose his graphic description, but Evelyn, now in his 83rd year, gives a sad account of it.

'*November* $\frac{26}{27}$.—The effects of the hurricane and tempest of wind, rain, and lightning through all the nation, especially in London, were very dismal. Many houses demolish'd and people kill'd. As to my own losses, the subversion of woods and timber, both ornamental and valuable, through my whole estate, and about my house, the woods crowning the garden mount, and growing along the park meadow, the damage to my own dwelling, farms, and outhouses, is almost tragical, and not to

be parallel'd with anything happening in our age. I am not able to describe it, but submit to the pleasure of Almighty God.' '*December 7.*—I remov'd to Dover Street, where I found all well, but houses, trees, garden, &c. at Say's Court suffered very much.'

Having mentioned the death of Pepys, Evelyn's particular friend of forty years' standing, and on whose death Mr. Jackson sent him 'compleat mourning, desiring me to be one to hold up the pall at his magnificent obsequies, but my indisposition hinder'd me from doing him this last office,' it will not be out of place to mention here that the amiable and excellent Evelyn himself died February 27, 1706, at London, in his 86th year. His last notes were of sermons heard at the chapel under the date of February 3. Few have ever left a better name.

The year following an arrangement took place relative to the Annates, or Firstfruits, which should be mentioned here, as Hanwood and its rector benefited by it long time after. It may be taken in Luttrell's words, which should be compared with those of Burnet. The former says, under '*Tuesday, Feb.* 8 :—Yesterday the Queen sent a message to the Commons to acquaint them that she will remit the arrears of the tenths to the poor clergy, and for an augmentation of their maintenance will make a grant of her whole revenue arising out of the firstfruits and tenths so farr as 'tis free from incumbrances ; and if the house can find any proper method by which her good intentions to the poor clergy may be made more effectual, 'twill be very acceptable to her.' Burnet tells us that he had laid this matter before the late Queen Mary and William III., and he adds by-and-by, 'The Queen,' i.e. Queen Anne, 'was pleased to let it be known that the first motion of this matter came from me.' Such a project would have been much magnified at another time, and those who had promoted it would have been looked on as the truest friends of the Church ; but this did not seem to make any great impression at that time : only it produced a set of addresses from all the clergy of England full of thanks and just acknowledgments. Thus ended a Papal exaction which had been swallowed and continued with all greediness by

Henry VIII., and had still been 'obtained by favourites for themselves and their friends, and never applied,' says Burnet, 'to any good use; and in King Charles II.'s time it went chiefly among his women and his natural children.' It seemed strange that while the clergy had much credit at court they had never represented this as sacrilege, unless it was applied to some religious purpose; and that during Archbishop Laud's favour with King Charles I. or at the Restoration of King Charles II., no endeavours had been made to appropriate this to better uses; sacrilege was charged on other things on very slight grounds, but this, which was more visible, was always forgot.

The preamble to the Act 2 & 3 Anne, c. 20, establishes the corporation now so well known as the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty.

It was in the latter part of this year—August 11, 1704—that Marlborough gained the great victory at Hochstedt, on the Danube, some three miles distant from Blenheim, which, like Waterloo, still holds the name. But, somehow or another, on the Rea-side and in this lovely valley,

Though 'twas a famous victory,

it was not one which created any great sensation. The same, indeed, may be said of that of Ramillies, May 23, 1706; of Oudenarde, July 10, 1708; and of Malplaquet, September 11, 1709. Foreign wars have seldom been acceptable to the people at large, and although my Talking Friend told me that the name of Marlborough was one he often heard mentioned, yet it was not one in which the people seemed vastly interested.

In those days the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury spoke of two very eminent men, whose names were the more familiar to them as they were severally bishops of the two adjoining Welsh sees, St. Asaph's and St. David's. These were Beveridge and Bull, the both of them pious and devout prelates, and eminently skilled in ecclesiastical knowledge. Bishop Bull is especially mentioned here because, with the treatises of Bishop Pearson before alluded to, his works, and particularly his 'Defensio Fidei Nicænæ,' were found in the

old chamber at Meole, one of those secret chambers which excited the curiosity of my childhood, but which belonged to old houses where hiding-places were essential, and of which it will be recollected that Charles II. took advantage more than once. Burnet says of Bishop Bull that he 'had writ the learnedest treatise that this age had produced of the doctrine of the primitive Church concerning the Trinity. This had been so well received all Europe over, that in an assembly general of the clergy of France, the Bishop of Meaux was desired to write over to a correspondent in London that they had such a sense of the service he had done their common faith, that upon it they sent him their particular thanks. I read the letter, and so I can deliver it for a certain truth, how uncommon soever it may seem to be.' Under February 23 1710, Luttrell has this insertion, 'Dr. Bull, Bishop of St. David's, is dead.' His friend, Bishop Beveridge, died about two years before him. In the same 'Diary,' under March 6, 1708, are these words, 'Dr. Beveridge, Bishop of St. Asaph, died this morning.' It may be added here that the name of Patrick, the pious and learned Bishop of Ely, was likewise well known in the valley. He died the year before Bishop Beveridge. In Luttrell, under June 3, 1707, 'Dr. Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely, is dead.' All of them departed hence—

Strong in the patience which is born of Hope.

Pleasant were they in their lives, all of them, and attached to each other, each being bound in evangelical bonds and one love for the Church to which they belonged. It is a pretty saying of William Sheridan, Bishop of Kilmore, the stern opponent of the Romanists in his day, 'The Graces were pictured with their faces one towards another to show that courtesies and civilities should be reciprocal.' Luttrell mentions him also under April 2, 1692. 'Dr. Huntingdon, provost of Dublin, is made bishop of Kilmore, Dr. Sheridan, the late bishop, refusing to take the oathes.' Whoever will take the pains to read his sermons will find them full of matter.

Somewhere about this time my Talking Friend spoke of

a most trying and severe winter, in which the Rea and most of the tributaries of the Severn were frozen up. The county was never known to have been so visited by wild fowl, and the wild ducks and wild geese on Marton Pool were snared in great quantities, and brought down to Shrewsbury for sale. Those who brought them rested under the Old Oak, and he heard all about it. He said, likewise that the wood-pigeons, or 'queists,' according to the local name, gathered together in great flocks, and did much damage to the grain throughout the whole valley. Many golden plovers packed in the Newnham low grounds, and it was confidently reported that hoopings were heard at night—possibly those of the whooping swan—though I do not recollect that anything but their whistle was ever heard in Shropshire.

On referring to the page of Luttrell's useful though tedious 'Diary,' I suspect the churlish winter alluded to by my Talking Friend must have been that of 1708, for under Saturday, January 8, in that year he says: 'On the 26th of December last it began to freeze, and so continued with snow every day, more or less, till about Thursday the 6th instant, when the snow ceased, which was then very deep, but it lay on the ground without the least thaw, and continued freezing till the 9th in the evening, when was a very great fogg, when the weather began to give and the snow to melt; it was very sharp, and the Thames was frozen in several places, and people walkt upon the same.' The careful reader of this 'Diary' will find that the thaw was of short continuance, in fact, that there was nothing else but alternate snows, frost, thaws, and cold rain till January 30, when it was thought the weather would give, but on Monday, February 7, the frost came on again 'with a sharp easterly and north-easterly wind,' and within another week the Thames was frozen over in places. More or less this sharp weather continued till the first week in March, and was severely felt throughout the kingdom. The extract following, under Tuesday, May 10, shows that it was equally severe in the north. 'Letters from Riga (a town belonging to the Swedes) give a dismall account on breaking of the ice there, and inundations upon it; that of 40 ships in the harbour 15 were lost, and the

floods carried off abundance of men and cattle, and that most of the houses and people in a village were driven away.'

The next circumstance bruited in the valley was Dr. Sacheverel's arrival in Shrewsbury on his way to the living of Selattyn near Oswestry, to which he was presented by his old pupil, Robert Lloyd of Aston. His visit, my Talking Friend said, was a constant subject of conversation between the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury, who both of them thought him a firebrand. Little thought my brother and I, when in our boyhood we visited kind old Miss Baugh at Selattyn that such a celebrity as Sacheverel had been its rector. Certainly the good old lady mentioned would have treated him with as little deference and consideration as she did the great bluebottle flies, against which she waged a constant war.

Burnet speaks of Sacheverel's trial as one of the most extraordinary transactions of his time, and he thus describes the man :—' Dr. Sacheverel was a bold, insolent man, with a very small measure of religion, virtue, learning, or good sense ; but he resolved to force himself into popularity and preferment by the most petulant railings at Dissenters and Low Churchmen in several sermons and libels wrote without either chasteness of style or liveliness of expression ; all was one unpractised strain of indecent and scurrilous language. When he had pursued this method for several years without effect, he was at last brought up by a popular election to a church in Southwark, where he began to make great reflections on the Ministry, representing that the Church was in danger, being neglected by those who governed, while they favoured her most inveterate enemies. At the assizes at Derby (where he preached before the judges), and on the 5th of November (preaching at St. Paul's in London), he gave a full vent to his fury in the most virulent declamation that he could contrive, upon these words of St. Paul, "*Perils from false brethren*," in which, after some short reflections upon Popery, he let himself loose into such indecencies that both the man and the sermon were universally condemned.'

Such is Burnet's character of the man, sufficiently correct, no doubt, as regards the improprieties of his language, but

underrated as regards his abilities, for he was the friend of Atterbury and Addison, who were no mean judges of talent.

The reader who may wish for full particulars of all that concerns this very injudicious trial of Sacheverel will find them regularly jotted down in Luttrell's 'Diary,' together with the abstract of the articles. Under Thursday, November 10, Luttrell states, 'It being proposed in the court of aldermen of London to thank Dr. Sacheverel for his sermon before them on the 5th of November, they rejected the same.' Sacheverel affirmed that the Lord Mayor had given his permission, and, Burnet says, 'brought witnesses to prove it, yet the house would not enter on that examination, but it was thought more decent to give credit to their own member, though indeed few believed him.'

And thus the cry of 'THE CHURCH AND SACHEVEREL' was unhappily raised, and very many of the clergy sided with a man whom they could not respect. On Wednesday, February 8, 'the lords ordered Sir Christopher Wren to build within twelve days a scaffold in Westminster Hall for tryal of Dr. Sacheverel, large enough for 200 Peers and 568 Commons,' are the words of Luttrell, and on Monday, February 28, the Commons took their places. On the Wednesday both houses were seated in the Hall, 'the queen present,' and then the untoward trial commenced; and when the day's work was over Sacheverel was followed by a great mob to the Temple, who attacked Mr. Burgess's meeting-house there, pulling down all the pews, wainscot, &c., making a bonfire thereof in Lincoln's Inn Fields, one being killed in the tumult; thence they went and did the like in many other places, and were only put down by the arrival of the horse-guards. Burnet saw all this, and informs us that those who did not join in the cry of 'THE CHURCH AND SACHEVEREL' were insulted and knocked down: 'Before my own door one with a spade cleft the skull of another who would not shout as they did. There happened to be a meeting-house near me out of which they drew everything that was in it, and burned it before the door of the house. They threatened to do the like execution on my house, but, the noise of the riot

coming to court, orders were sent to the guards to go about and disperse the multitudes and secure the public peace,' corroborating Luttrell's words.

Burnet informs us that when the counsel had ended the defence, Sacheverel concluded it with a speech, which he read with much bold heat,' and adds, 'It was very plain the speech was made for him by others, for the style was correct, and far different from his own.' Though he was suspended for three years from preaching, and his sermons ordered to be burnt, which was done, his party looked upon all this pretty much as a victory. To use the words of Burnet again, 'When this mild judgment was given, those who had supported him during the trial expressed an inconceivable gladness, as if they had got a victory; bonfires, illuminations, and other marks of joy appeared, not only in London, but over the whole kingdom.' The Oxford Decree of July 21, 1683, which was burnt with his sermon, was that which asserted the necessity of passive obedience.

Looking to his great popularity at this time, Lord Mahon asks: 'Would not all this appear to imply that he must have possessed some degree of talent or of merit?' and answers thus in the negative: 'Yet the concurrent testimony of some of his friends, as well as of his enemies, represents him as utterly foolish, ignorant, ungrateful, his head reeling with vanity, his heart overflowing with gall. This venerated idol, when we come to try the substance, appears little more than a stock or stone. But Sacheverel was considered as the representative of a popular party doctrine—as the champion and the martyr of the High Church cause; and the multitude, which always looks to persons much more than to principles, can rarely be won over until even the clearest maxim appears embodied in some favourite leader.' Meanwhile the Tory ministry was the result of this commotion, and they used him as their tool.

His sentence expired March 23, 1713, and on the Sunday following he preached at St. Saviour's, taking for his text Luke xxiii. 34, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'; instituting a painful comparison between his own sufferings and the Redeemer's Passion. Strange as it

may appear, the House of Commons appointed him to preach before them on the Day of the Restoration. The last sermon of his that I find mentioned in Luttrell is on March 28, 1714, when he says: '*Sunday.*—Dr. Sacheverel preached at St. Martin's Church a very warm sermon; his text, I. Kings c. ii. 15'—an entry which he corrects thus in the following page: 'Dr. Sacheverel's text, mentioned in my last, was the II. of Chronicles c. ix. vv. 7, 8; tho' in the sermon, 'tis said, he quoted the 15th v. of the iid chapter of I. Kings, which made several of the auditory mistake the text.'

By extraction Sacheverel was supposed to be of the Wiltshire Cheverells, the 'Sa' having been prefixed by one of his ancestors, so connecting himself with the Derbyshire family of the same name. It would appear that he was in Shrewsbury, on his 'progress' to Selattyn, early in July, 1710. He was received, on his way, with that sort of triumph which Burnet tells of, being 'received and followed by such numbers, and entertained with such magnificence, that our princes in their progresses have not been more run after than he was.' As far as the old town was concerned, the public crier proclaimed his coming, and the bells rang out their loudest peals, and a procession of from five to seven thousand horsemen went forth to meet him as far as Montford's Bridge. On his arrival he was conducted to the Raven, and entertained after old Shropshire fashion. A characteristic reply is reported of him, with reference to some of the ministry who did not wish to make such a display, but who desired to wait upon him at night, 'that he would have no Nicodemuses.' It was not all Shropshire, however, that so fêted him; for, our historians inform us, 'There is a violent invective against him in rhyme, entitled, "The Wolf Stript of the Shepherd's Clothing, addressed to Dr. Sacheverel by a Salopian gentleman." Government thought the affair so important that the Secretary of State wrote to the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire (the Earl of Bradford) that it was Her Majesty's pleasure that his lordship and the gentlemen of the county should prosecute the offenders on this occasion with the utmost severity.' It is added in a note that 'wherever the Doctor went, people were desirous to have their new-born infants christened with

a name so revered; and, having been transmitted through several generations, it is not yet extinct in this town.' This was written in 1825. I do not know if the name remains still, but my old schoolfellow the Dean of Wells, of Salopian extraction, still shows the name in his initials.

I may add, in concluding these remarks on Sacheverel, that the following insertion in Luttrell's 'Diary' may have something to do with the proceedings above referred to. It occurs under Tuesday, April 11, 1710: 'At Shrewsbury assizes, a non-juror with several other persons, badly assembled in a riotous manner, insulted some of the council going that circuit, and committed other disorders, for which, 'tis said, they'll be prosecuted; they also attempted to get an addresse of the same nature as theirs from Gloucestershire, sign'd by the grand jury, but 'twas rejected.'

In passing on from this extraordinary man and his trial, it should be added that neither of the establishment of the South Sea Company in 1710, which arose, like the Bank of England, from the embarrassments of the Government, nor of the bursting of that great bubble afterwards, in George I.'s time, was anything known in the valley—

> Standing as did old Hospitalitie,
> With ready armes to succour any needes!

As far as local history is concerned, my Talking Friend could give me no further information during this reign. Much he had heard people say of that disgraceful party spirit which all but ruined the best interests of the nation. But, as a body, the natives by the Rea-side were not politicians; neither would they have taken any interest in the squabbles of a Mrs. Masham and a *camarilla*. One matter only seemed to excite the indignation of these parts, and that was the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, because it was derogatory to the honour of England, and by it the country lost almost all that Marlborough had gained. It is at the conclusion of this unworthy treaty that Lord Mahon commences his interesting history, and he very properly calls it 'the shameful peace of Utrecht.'

As a connecting link in these historical details, it should here be mentioned that the Princess Sophia of Hanover,

daughter of James I.'s daughter, the electress-palatine, died June 8, 1714, and her son George I. became heir to the British throne under the Act of Settlement. Southey, in his Life of Marlborough, speaks of her 'as a very remarkable person, who, at the age of eighty-four, retained an unusual strength of body and mind, and used to say that if she could but live to have "Sophia Queen of England" engraven on her tomb she should die content. Had she lived three months longer her wish would have been gratified.' At the age of seventy-five Burnet speaks of her as one 'of so much vivacity that as she was the most knowing and the most entertaining woman of the age, so she seemed willing to change the scene, and to come and shine among us in England.'

Meanwhile the queen's days were coming to an end, and trouble upon trouble, together with the dissensions of her ministers at the Council Board, only tended to hasten her death. On July 27, Bolingbroke and Oxford sat in the Council Chamber till two o'clock in the morning, the queen being present. She declared it would be the death of her, and so, probably, it was. She died on the 1st of August, 1714, in the fiftieth year of her age, and the thirteenth of her reign. With all her faults and her weaknesses, she was a good woman, and greatly attached to her people, for whom she felt the fondness of a mother, 'by whom,' says Smollett, 'she was universally beloved, with a warmth of affection which even the prejudice of party could not abate.' In a word, if she was not the greatest, she was certainly one of the best and most unblemished sovereigns that ever sat upon the throne of England; and well deserved the expressive, though simple, epithet of THE GOOD QUEEN ANNE.

Without referring to the prose of Milton, in many parts so stately, but oftentimes so cumbersome, there can be no doubt but that the great step in advance was first made by the great divines of the days of James I., Charles I., and Charles II. None can read their writings and not be aware of this; and, on the whole the observations which follow from Hallam's 'Introduction to the Literature of Europe' are much to the purpose, for he was no careless writer.

'A sensible improvement in the general style of English

writers had come on before the expiration of the sixteenth century ; the rude and rough phrases, sometimes requiring a glossary, which lie as spots of rust on the pages of Latimer, Grafton, Aylmer, or even Ascham, had been chiefly polished away ; if we meet in Sydney, Hooker, or the prose of Spenser, with obsolete expressions or forms, we find none that are unintelligible, none that give us offence. But to this next period belong most of those whom we commonly reckon our old English writers ; men often of such sterling worth for literature that we might read them with little regard to their language, yet, in some instances at least, possessing much that demands praise in this respect. They are generally nervous and effective, copious to redundancy in the command of words, apt to employ what seemed to them ornament with much imagination rather than judicious taste.'

Such was the opinion of Hallam on this subject.

One greater writer in pure nervous English previous to the Restoration was the celebrated Robert South, whose style Southey somewhere calls the standard of the English language. Without acquiescing in his bitterness, we perceive a masculine spirit in his periods which bespeaks him that high position as a master of his native tongue which no time can disallow. He was born at Hackney in 1633 ; became Public Orator at Oxford, and afterwards Canon of Christ Church ; was chaplain to the Earl of Clarendon, who gave him his prebend at Westminster. This was the man who, as King's Scholar, read the Latin prayers in the School on the day of King Charles's martyrdom, and prayed for his majesty by name. He died in 1706, and was not the man, in any of his sermons—which are many and good—to emasculate or enervate the English language. That he had studied it carefully is evident from one of his sermons, which Southey wrote me word was 'most evidently written in imitation of Sir Thomas Browne, probably as a trial of skill.' The reader should by all means refer to it.

Meanwhile came the Restoration—as regards the progress of poetry the dullest of all dull times—but with a vast improvement in its prose. 'A greater ease of writing was what

the public demanded, and what the writers after the Restoration sought to attain'—as they did; but Dryden had led the way. Hallam gives the credit to Hobbes of being the first good English writer. He died in the year 1679—nearly forty years before South—who describes him as 'a like philosopher, though a greater heathen' than Epicurus—naming him as 'the infamous author of the Leviathan'—and elsewhere as the great oracle of those 'who admit of no substance but body.' But, passing by his tenets, he is, as Hallam describes him, 'clear, precise, spirited, and above all free, in general, from the faults of his predecessors; his language is sensibly less obsolete; he is never vulgar, rarely, if ever, quaint or pedantic.' Meanwhile, up to this time, Dryden's style, I think, must be ranked next to South's, and then come Sir William Temple's Essays, in which Hallam and I should accord.

As for the 'Last of the Old Squires' who dwelt in the valley of the Rea and in the old homestead at Meole, he, as a lover of the angle, would have been delighted with this other notice of the historian, as much as some may be unreasonably surprised. But Wordsworth was right when he said of Walton's 'Lives,'

> There are no colours in the fairest sky
> So fair as these.

Hallam's words are: 'It must be confessed that our golden age did not begin before the eighteenth century, and then with him who has never since been rivalled in grace, humour, and invention. Walton's "Complete Angler," published in 1653, seems by the title a strange choice out of all the books of half a century; yet its simplicity, its sweetness, its natural grace, and happy intermixture of graver strains with the precepts of angling, have rendered this book deservedly popular, and a model which one of the most famous among our late philosophers, and a successful disciple of Izaak Walton in his favourite art, has condescended to translate.' Whether they agree to the position given to Walton or no, all readers will agree with the character Hallam gives

to the book, which still, like 'Robinson Crusoe,' maintains its position, being one of the most delightful books ever written. The 'Telemachus' of Fénelon has not been more diligently read in France than Walton's 'Lives' and his 'Complete Angler' have been in England.

Not to the disparagement of any others, I may venture to write down a few great names here who not only enlarged the bounds of our literature, but simplified and improved our style and language more, perhaps, than any before.

1. In the first rank, certainly, looking to his period, comes Dryden, born at Aldwinkle, in Northamptonshire, August 9, 1631; died in London, May 1, 1700, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

2 Close upon the poet comes the philosopher and the scholar, the celebrated John Locke, born at Wrington, Somerset, August 29, 1632; died at Oates, October 28, 1704. Notwithstanding all opponents, a great name is Locke's.

3. Then must be named Sir Isaac Newton—that great light—born at Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire, December 25, 1642; died March 20, 1727, at Kensington. He lies buried, like Dryden, in Westminster Abbey, and the inscription on the monument ends with these words: 'Sibi gratulentur mortales tale tantumque exstitisse humani generis decus.' This was that great man who said, but a little before he died, 'I don't know what I may seem to the world, but, as to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great Ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered before me.'

4. The name of Defoe must not be omitted on this list, and the reader will call to mind that it has been mentioned before in connection with the Diary of the Plague. He was born in St. Giles', Cripplegate, where his father, James Foe, was a butcher, about the year 1661. He died April 24, 1731, in London. He was educated, as is well-known, among the Dissenters. It is superfluous to say more of so well-known a name, and I will only add the remark of Pope: 'The first part of "Robinson Crusoe" is very good. De Foe writes a vast many things, and some bad, though none excellent except

this. There is something good in all he has written.' Poor, faint praise, indeed!

5. Next in order of time should be mentioned Swift, born in Dublin, November 30, 1667, and died October 19, 1745, a living wreck of humanity. After all his outrageous frenzy at times, he died, says Scott, 'upon that day without a single pang; so gently, indeed, that his attendants were scarce aware of the moment of his dissolution.' This is not the place to speak of the man, with whom his biographer has dealt as gently as he might. He is introduced here as a master of style.

6. Steele was born the year before Addison, in Dublin, 1791, and died at Llangunnor, near Carmarthen, South Wales, September 1, 1729. He it was who commenced the 'Tatler,' the 'Spectator,' and the 'Guardian'—'the sprightly father of the English Essay,' as John Forster called him in his genial 'Life,' to which the reader is referred for the fairest sketch of his mixed character.

7. Next comes Addison, whose name, like Sir Roger de Coverley's, is a sort of household word on every Englishman's tongue, born at Milston in Wiltshire, near Ambresbury, of which his father, Lancelot Addison, was rector, on May 1, 1672, and died at Holland House, June 17, 1719, having first sent for the young Lord Warwick, whose mother he had married, a young man of irregular habits, and to whom Addison's bearing was the tenderest. It was upon this occasion that the good man said, 'I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die!' and the young man died himself soon after. Tickell told Dr. Young that it was to this interview he alluded in his Elegy:—

> He taught us how to live; and—oh! too high
> The pride of knowledge—taught us how to die.

I have nothing to do with Addison's literary squabbles—I can only here look upon him as a good man in the main—and one of the purest, if not the purest, of our English prose writers.

8. To omit the name of Pope in this little summary would be wrong, for although the tinsel of his verse is tinsel, and

not the revised English of Dryden, it must nevertheless be admitted that his power over English was great. What Southey thought of his debasement of poetry may be seen in Chapter XII. of the 'Life of Cowper,' where he gives a sketch of the progress of English poetry from the time of Chaucer to Cowper's day. But the general reader will refer, of course, to his 'Life' by Johnson. Pope was born in Lombard Street ('where,' says Mrs. Blount, 'his father was a merchant who dealt in Hollands'), May 22, 1688, and died at Twickenham, the spot he loved so well, March 20, 1727.

One name, I think, should yet be mentioned here, in a literary point of view, though on other accounts it would be omitted, and that is the name of Matthew Prior—'one Prior,' Burnet called him, 'who had been James's secretary, and, upon his death, was employed to prosecute that'—i.e. a peace with France—'which the other did not live to finish. Prior had been taken when a boy out of a tavern by the Earl of Dorset, who accidentally found him reading Horace; and he, being very generous, gave him an education in literature.' He was born July 21, 1664, in Abbot Street, one mile from Wimborne Minster, Dorset, and died September 18, 1721, at Wimpole, a seat of the Earl of Oxford. He certainly knew how to turn the English language over his fingers, and might have excelled as a writer of prose.

One of Southey's long-cherished wishes was to have continued Warton's 'History of English Poetry.' No one could have done it better—nor could anyone have written an account of our English prose more felicitously.

Looking to how much I have lived to forget, I venture to insert at the end of these remarks a very striking passage from Locke's 'Essay concerning Human Understanding.' It will be found in the Tenth Chapter of the Second Book, and is headed 'Retention.' As to some of the philosophy, I dare say it may be wrong, but there is a clear and evident moral in the words which must be right.

'In all these cases, ideas in the mind quickly fade and often vanish quite out of the understanding, leaving no more footsteps or remaining characters of themselves than shadows

do flying over fields of corn; and the mind is as void of them as if they had never been there.

'Thus many of those ideas which were produced on the minds of children in the beginning of their sensation (some of which, perhaps, some pleasures and pains, were before they were born, and others in their infancy), if in the future course of their lives they are not repeated again, are quite lost, without the least glimpse remaining of them. This may be observed in those who, by some mischance, have lost their sight when they were very young, in whom the idea of colours having been but slightly taken notice of, and ceasing to be repeated, doth quite wear out; so that some years after there is no more notion or memory of colours left in their minds than in those of people born blind. The memory of some, it is true, is very tenacious, even to a miracle; but yet there seems to be a constant decay of all our ideas, even of those which are struck deepest, and in minds the most retentive; so that if they be not sometimes renewed by repeated exercise of the senses, or reflection on those kinds of objects which at first occasioned them, the print wears out, and at last there remains nothing to be seen. Thus the ideas, as well as children of our youth, often die before us, and our minds represent to us those tombs to which we are approaching; where, though the brass and the marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. The pictures drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours, and if not sometimes refreshed, vanish and disappear. How much the constitution of our bodies and the make of our animal spirits are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain makes this difference, that in some it retains the characters drawn in it like marble, in others like freestone, and in others little better than sand, I shall not here inquire, though it may seem probable that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory; like we oftentimes find a disease quite strip the mind of all its ideas, and the flames of a fever in a few days calcine all the images to dust and confusion, which seemed to be so lasting as if graved in marble.'[1]

[1] Vol. i. 129. Ed. 1793, 8vo.

Locke was a good scholar, and no doubt had in his mind the two following passages of that splendid 'Satire' of Juvenal:—

> Patriam tamen obruit olim
> Gloria paucorum, et laudis titulique cupido
> Hæsuri saxis cinerum custodibus, ad quæ
> Discutienda valent sterilis mala robora ficus:
> Quandoquidem data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulcris.
>
> *Sat.* x. 142.

> Sed omni
> Membrorum damno major dementia, quæ nec
> Nomina servorum, nec vultum agnoscit amici,
> Cum quo præterita cœnavit nocte, nec illos
> Quos genuit, quos eduxit.
>
> *Ibid.* 232.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE HANOVERIAN SUCCESSION.

A hard fate that the enthronement of a stranger should have been the only means to secure our liberties and laws! Almost a century of foreign masters! Such has been the indirect but undoubted effect of the Great Rebellion. Charles and James, driven abroad by the tumults at home, received a French education, and pursued a French policy. Their government was overthrown by a Dutchman; George I. and George II. were entirely German; thus from 1660 to 1760, when a truly English monarch once more ascended the throne, the reign of Queen Anne appears the only exception to a foreign dominion.—LORD MAHON, vol. i. 146.

The gardens and pavilions of Herrenhausen are scarce changed since the day when the stout old Electress fell down in her last walk there, preceding but by a few weeks to the tomb James II.'s daughter, whose death made way for the Brunswick Stuarts in England.—THACKERAY'S *First George.*

> He hath a mighty burden to sustain
> Whose fortune doth succeed a gracious prince;
> Or when men's expectations entertain
> Hopes of more good and more beneficence.
>
> DANIEL'S *Panegyric to the King's Majesty*, p. 579.

GEORGE I. arrived at Greenwich on September 16, 1714, and was in the fifty-sixth year of his age, at which time men rarely learn a new language. The consequence was that he never spoke anything but very broken and almost unintelligible English.

The accession could hardly be called acceptable in the old town, which, perhaps, rather befriended the Pretender—most certainly disliked the Whigs as unfriendly to the Church, upon many of whom they looked also, as did Thomas Hearne, as 'snivelling, and poor-spirited.' The prejudices of others may be understood from the Antiquarian, who says of his old schoolfellow at Bray in Berks, 'I should have been glad to

have had a pretty deal of conversation with this Mr. Samuel Cherry,' whom he met by chance in Oxford after an absence of many years, never, indeed, since Queen Anne's time, when he saw him in the Bodleian Gallery, but no convenient opportunity occurred for privacy. Still worthy prejudiced Thomas Hearne was ready for a gossip, 'had not he been of the Georgian strain, as without doubt he is, being an officer in George's army.' Such was the state of feeling at this time!

But before stating what occurred in Shrewsbury let me lay before the reader some introductory sentences from Thackeray's 'Four Georges,' so well written and so characteristically grasped by this great master of his craft. The lady alluded to is Miss Berry, no doubt, whose 'Journal and Correspondence' was published by the late Lady Theresa Lewis. The reader will likewise recollect that it was for the amusement of Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry that Horace Walpole wrote his 'Reminiscences of George I. and George II.' in 1783, to which reference will be made by-and-by.

'Very few years since,' says Thackeray, 'I knew familiarly a lady who had been asked in marriage by Horace Walpole, who had been patted on the head by George I. This lady had knocked at Dr. Johnson's door; had been intimate with Fox, the beautiful Georgine of Devonshire, and that brilliant Whig society of the reign of George III.; had known the Duchess of Queensbury, the patroness of Gay and Prior, the admired young beauty of the Court of Queen Anne. I often thought as I took my kind old friend's hand how with it I held on to the old society of wits and men of the world. I could travel back for sevenscore years of time—have glimpses of Brummel, Selwyn, Chesterfield, and the men of pleasure; of Walpole and Conway; of Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith; of North, Chatham, Newcastle; of the fair maids of honour of George II.'s Court; of the German retainers of George I., &c.; when Addison was Secretary of State; when Dick Steele held a place; whither the great Marlborough came with his fiery spouse; when Pope and Swift and Bolingbroke yet lived and wrote.'

George I., son of Ernest Augustus, the first Elector of

Brunswick, and Sophia, Electress of Hanover, daughter of James I.'s daughter, the Electress-Palatine, ascended the British throne. He had married the Princess Sophia Dorothea, of Zell, whom he shut up in the Castle of Ahlden, not far from Hanover, and who died only the year before him, after an imprisonment of between thirty and forty years. Her connection with Philip of Königsmarck is now a matter of history since the discovery of the letters in the library of Upsala.

Horace Walpole tells us that George I. came to the throne by surmounting a rebellion, which in some sense may be true, and says that his reign was 'little more than the Proem to the History of England under the House of Brunswick.' As before stated, he could speak little or no English, and this it was which induced Sir Robert to say that he governed the kingdom by means of bad Latin.

It was in his seventy-first year that the Earl of Orford—so much better known by the familiar name of Horace Walpole—jotted down his 'Reminiscence of George I. and George II.' above referred to for his friends the Miss Berrys to whom he said pithily, 'If you coin an old gentleman into narratives you must expect a good deal of alloy.' Yet it is from this sketch that we have the vivid description of George I. before he set out for his last journey to Hanover, previous to which Horace's childish wish is gratified, and he sees the king. But the reader must have the account, a little abbreviated, in his own words.

'As I have never since felt any enthusiasm for royal persons, I must suppose that the female attendants in the family must have put it into my head *to long to see the king*. This childish caprice was so strong, that my mother solicited the Duchess of Kendal to obtain for me the honour of kissing his majesty's hand before he set out for Hanover. A favour so unusual to be asked for a boy of ten years old, was still too slight to be refused to the wife of the First Minister for her darling child; yet, not being proper to be made a precedent, it was settled to be in private and at night. Accordingly, the night but one before the king began his last journey, my mother carried me at ten at night to the apartment of

the Countess of Walsingham, on the ground floor towards the garden of St. James, which opened into that of her aunt, the Duchess of Kendal.

'Notice being given that the king was come down to supper, Lady Walsingham took me alone into the duchess's ante-room, where we found alone the king and her. I knelt down and kissed his hand. He said a few words to me, and my conductress led me back to my mother!

'The person of the king is as perfect in my memory as if I saw him but yesterday. It was that of an elderly man, rather pale, and exactly like his pictures and coins; not tall; of an aspect rather good than august; with a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat, and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of the same colour, and a blue riband over all.'

Such was the monarch who now ascended the English throne, taken from a sketch thirteen years later, and here anticipated.

As before stated, the accession of George was scarcely acceptable in the county of Shropshire, nor in the old town of Shrewsbury, nor indeed in the valley of the Rea. The result in the old town was an outbreak and the burning of the meeting-house in the High Street. By some wild freak of fancy the materials were carried into Frankwell; and Thomas Markham, who appears to have been the rector of Hanwood at that time, saw the bonfire on his return home, and heard the old party cry of 'Down with the Whigs! Sacheverel for ever!' So firm a hold did the rector of Selattyn's name still retain in the county. The Mayor of Shrewsbury, it is said, did very little indeed to discourage these tumultuary and irregular proceedings.

But, not only was it the case here but elsewhere, and, for some time to come, there was little amalgamation of parties in the land. It was even as the prince of the Greek tragedians put it long ago:

> ὄξος τ' ἄλειφά τ' ἐγχέας ταὐτῷ κύτει,
> διχοστατοῦντ' ἂν, οὐ φίλω, προσεννέποις.

The wheyey sour milk of Whiggism, certainly was, in the

old county considered a most unpalatable and nauseous beverage!

The result of this commotion in the old town—and there were similar ones in Birmingham, Bristol, Norwich, Reading, and elsewhere—was what was called the Riot Act of George I. At the same time a special letter was written by the Secretary of State, Lord Townshend, to one of the county magistrates, Thomas Severne, Esq., of Wallop—still the property of the family—in which evident distrust is implied of the Mayor of Shrewsbury. A similar letter was written to the high sheriff of the county and, as the postscript adds, to the Mayor himself of the 'said town of Salop.' The reader may see the letter to Mr. Severne, given at length by our historians. It should be added that Staffordshire, a neighbouring county and a stronghold of Tory politics, was particularly disturbed at this time. There were the pent-up few ready to burst out, and the cry was, 'Sacheverel and the Church!' 'High Church and Ormond for ever!'

As may be supposed and surmised, these proceedings were canvassed in the valley by comers and goers, and the Old Oak heard much of them. Indeed, I always observed that he was somewhat prejudiced on these points, and he had some timeworn and musty expressions which he constantly used. For instance, he spoke of *'nineted shavers* (i.e. anointed shavelings, or priests of the Romish Church); of *puritanical vagabonds* and *presbyterian rascals* (an idle sort of irreligious people who wandered up and down the country, and cheated the poor with their cant and worthless goods—so turning good names, in reality, to bad account); of these and the like to these he would speak with considerable tannin or bitterness —*for what is tannin in an oak is bitterness in man*—from which it is quite clear that if he thoroughly disliked the Hanoverian succession, he as thoroughly loved the Church of his fathers. Had they not for hundreds of years sheltered the several rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury under their hospitable boughs? And did they not rejoice to do so and to listen to their talk? Such is the evident record of these pages. My Talking Friend was no Whig, but a veritable Tory. But, Whig or Tory, the grand old tree had a most kindly

nature, and although, as he surveyed his time-worn trunk and rugged bark, he might have said as Henry V. said of himself to Kate, that his was

> A stubborn outside, with aspect of iron,

yet was his temper genial, without the stiffness of poplar, fig, or sycamore! And if he did every now and then say something sharp of such trees as these, or of the oriental and occidental plane more recently introduced,

> it was but an effect of humour
> Which sometime hath its power with every man.

George I., having taken the Whigs into his favour, gave great umbrage to the Tory party, which was increased by Lord Oxford's being sent to the Tower, and by the impeachment of the Duke of Ormond and Lord Bolingbroke. It was this which, in reality, caused the rising of the Jacobites and the proclamation of Prince James Stuart by the Earl of Mar, September 6, 1715.

It is at this time that we get a bit of local history again with reference to the old town, which, upon this outbreak, thought it right to show its loyalty to the throne; the more so, perhaps, because, on the disturbances before alluded to there was an evident leaning towards the Pretender, or, as he was at that time commonly called, the Chevalier de St. George.

The extract which follows from the pages of Phillips will show what movement was then made. '*Anno* 1715. Henry Lord Newport, Sir Charles Lloyd, Bart., William Kynaston, Thomas Gardner, and John Fownes, Esq., entered into an association, raised both horse and foot, and kept guard here, it being the time of the rebellion. New gates were made about the water, several passages stopt up, and the train bands called together. Brigadier Dormer's regiment, at that time in this town, was ordered to march to Preston.'

A fuller account, with a paper containing the names of all the officers who came forward on this occasion, may be seen in our historians. The details of the rebellion it is not necessary to enter upon, nor of Dormer's regiment of cavalry, nor

of the Battle of Preston on November 12, 1715, nor yet of what was done or left undone in Scotland, for no doubt a better stand might have been made than was made. Such was the clear opinion of Scott. It will be enough here to quote the words of Lord Mahon, which embody Sir Walter's: 'Mar had continued to linger at Perth even beyond the commencement of November, whereas a true general might have been master of Scotland six weeks before. It is well observed by Sir Walter Scott that, with a far less force than Mar had at his disposal, Montrose gained eight victories and overran Scotland; with fewer numbers of Highlanders Dundee gained the Battle of Killiecrankie; and with about half of the troops assembled at Perth, Charles Edward, in 1745, marched as far as Derby, and gained two victories over regular troops. But in 1715, by one of those misfortunes which dogged the House of Stuart since the days of Robert II., they lacked a man of military talent just at the time when they possessed an unusual quantity of military means.'

The little that was known of these matters in the valley of the Rea—at least in the neighbourhood of the old homestead of Meole and Hanwood—was picked up from the rector's friend, William Bennett, who was Vicar of St. Chad's in Shrewsbury, and at that time an aged man, and whose son Thomas was rector of the second portion of Westbury. It was a subject of conversation at the old convivial clubs in the Old Town, where the trade and the gentry met on familiar terms, as they did in those days, when many of the younger sons of old houses made fortunes which are not made now. The Vicar of St. Chad's was fond of a country walk, and it was a pleasant one to Hanwood to which he would come, tracing the Meole Brook all the way from the Old Abbey Pool in Shrewsbury to his great delight.

Meanwhile all was not rose colour at Court. A foreign language, foreign attendants, foreign views, are never acceptable to the English people, though, in course of time, they have been obliged to receive strangers, and to be thankful that they came over in due time of need.

But of the intrigues and the squabbles and the quarrels of the Court nothing was known in the valley of the Rea,

and probably few there had ever heard of the various dissensions between the King and his son—still fewer that the Prince and the Princess had ever been dismissed the Palace. Horace Walpole's account of all this is well worth reading, however painful. He remarks pithily in the beginning of his third chapter, 'I do suspect, from circumstances, that the hereditary enmity of the House of Brunswick between the parents and their eldest sons dates earlier than the divisions between the two first Georges'; and there is no doubt on the matter, for it is known to have existed at Hanover. 'In fact,' says Lord Mahon, 'it is remarkable as a peculiarity either of representative government or of the House of Hanover that since the power of the House of Commons has been thoroughly established, and since that family has reigned, the heirs apparent have always been on ill terms with their sovereign. There have been four Princes of Wales since the death of Anne, and all the four have gone into bitter opposition.' 'That family,' said Lord Carteret one day in full council, 'always has quarrelled, and always will quarrel from generation to generation.'

The Old Pretender, as he was called, was never equal to his position, though in himself an amiable man, and a man of refined tastes. Had he been so, it is not impossible that these dissensions would have been in his favour; and James Radcliffe, Earl of Derwentwater (whose lady's white handkerchief, lost in her flight, may be seen still on the Watton Crags at Keswick, over against the Lord's Island), and others many had not been executed and their estates confiscated and their banners rent. The romantic escape of Lord Nithisdale on this occasion is well known, and his wife's affecting narrative may be seen in the appendix to Lord Mahon's second volume. Lord Winton likewise contrived to make his escape from the Tower. He it was who said to the High Steward, Lord Cowper, 'I hope you will do me justice, and not make use of Couper-law, as we used to say in our country; hang a man first and then judge him,' reminding us of another old proverb—

> First hang and draw,
> Then hear the cause by Lydford law—

that originated in the Stannary laws there, which were cruelly enforced. The dungeons of old Lydford Castle are said to have been as frightful as those of the inhuman Spanish Inquisition. The proverb has been referred to before in an earlier page of these papers.

It was in 1716, when matters seemed to be quieted down a little, that George I., whose patience could hold out no longer, and notwithstanding the representations of his ministers to the contrary, determined to visit his beloved Hanover. Previous to this the Septennial Bill was passed (as early indeed as April 26), and, unwilling as he was to delegate power to his son, he was obliged (as he would not give the Prince the title of Regent) to name him Guardian of the Realm, and Lieutenant. And thus all matters being settled as regarded the limitation of the Crown—more to his own satisfaction than to that of his ministers—he began his journey on July 9.

There had been heavy rains one day when I was in conversation with my Talking Friend, and he called my attention to the great beauty of his foliage, for the sun was then shining well out, and they glistened in his rays. 'For his part,' he said, 'he thought the woods round about never looked so well as after a thunderstorm about midsummer, and the more so, as concerned his own tribe, as the new shoots were just formed, and contrasted well with those of spring.' And certainly I was much inclined to agree with my old friend. Long after this I read in a modern volume, 'Adventures among the Dyaks of Borneo,' the passage following, and I bethought me of what the Old Oak had said on the subject:

'A palm-tree on a wet day presents to my mind the chief sign and emblem of misery, and Sakarsan Fort is surrounded by lofty Penang palms. When the rain falls upon them the graceful leaves droop, and the fronds contract, and the crown draggles like a wet ostrich plume. An oak or an elm in a shower is much like an oak or an elm in sunshine, but a wet palm-tree is a most melancholy anomaly. Who can preserve his cheerfulness in beholding this sight?'

Certainly, in my eyes, an oak is always a grand tree—especially an elder of the forest—whether in winter or in summer.

If the palm-tree has its own peculiar grace, and form, and flower, so does the oak maintain its dignity.

> The rose, although in thorny shrubs she spread,
> Is still the rose ; her beauties are not dead ;
> And noble minds, although the coat be bare,
> Are by that semblance known how great they are.

A flood in the Rea, in the autumn of 1717, created a much greater sensation than Walpole's resignation had done in the spring. It appeared to have done considerable damage, and in its results not only produced the rot amongst the sheep but tended to prolong the murrain among the cows, which, as is stated in records of the day, appeared to be at its height in 1717.

One circumstance attendant upon the Act of Grace and Free Pardon, which was the last measure of the session this year, was mentioned in the old town as highly satisfactory, and that was the setting free at Chester of some two hundred prisoners taken at Preston. Some of these returned to Wrexham and Shrewsbury, and some thence to Minsterley, Newtown, Welshpool, Bishop's Castle, and Montgomery, and the Old Oak heard a good deal of what they said by the way, and came to the conclusion that the horrors of a prison in those days were pretty much as great as the horrors of war.

It may be added that it was in this year that the last sitting of the Houses of Convocation was convened. But neither that circumstance nor, indeed, the painful particulars of the Bangorian Controversy have any place in these pages, though the name of Hoadley was known in the valley, as he was for some time Bishop of Hereford, in which diocese Hanwood is situated. It was many years afterwards—in 1754—that Akenside wrote his remarkable ode, which shows at least that different opinions were held of Hoadley. In private life, and by his own hearth and fireside he appears to have been a very lovable man indeed. Of his religious views I speak not—because I do not agree with them—but by a fireside there is a pleasure, and not a small one, in being able to agree to differ. Individually I am inclined to think that Hoadley, as an honest man, should have resigned all his preferments, and have fallen into the ranks of Dissent. How

many clergymen now hold livings who are utterly and entirely unjustified in doing so! South, in his sermons, has said many bitter things, but he always spoke the truth on this head.

It was in the year 1718 that there was a great meeting of the Quakers in Shrewsbury, held for four days in the Wool Hall, by which I am not sure which is meant, the rooms above the Market House, where wools and woollens were formerly bought and sold—the Shearman's Hall—or the Draper's Hall. In this, however, or the other this meeting was held, for my Talking Friend heard the reverend Rector of Hanwood, John Cotton, speak of it. He was at the same time Vicar of Brace Meole, from where he happened to come over on one of the days on which the meeting of the Hatters, or Quakers, was held. A similar one was held in 1727, the last year of George I.'s reign. The first assembly of the Quakers was held in Leicestershire in 1644, and it is to be borne in mind that from the Restoration in 1688 they had received the benefit of the Toleration Act. Robert Barclay, their great leader, died in 1690. It was one of his sons—George, the draper of Cheapside—who had the honour of entertaining the first Georges when they dined in the City on the Lord Mayor's Day.

In the year 1719 a good deal of planting seems to have gone on in the country, and agriculture as well as horticulture progressed much, and my Talking Friend told me that tulips, auriculas and anemones began to be planted and highly cultivated in the gentlemen's gardens round about, who particularly prided themselves upon the rich powder of the auriculas. I could not find out that any local matters in the valley were worthy of record at this time, but everyone as he passed and repassed spoke of the planting of the Quarry in Shrewsbury, and this was a matter which greatly excited the interest of my Talking Friend, who highly approved of it and exalted the name of Henry Jenks, who was Mayor at that time, though he thought, as was natural, that the Valley should have been planted with oaks rather than with lime trees. But it was a kindly act done, and a proof of good taste, even had the man not been in a high position when he did it; for even—

> From lowest place when virtuous things proceed
> The place is dignified by the doer's deed.

The Quarry is a spot of too great local repute to be left unmentioned here, for all the country people who visited the town were sure to visit it, though the stage-plays, and the cock-fightings, and the bull-baitings of ancient days had now well-nigh passed away. 'Punch and Judy' now is the last remnant!

The Quarry, so called from the red sandstone which was *quarrelled*, or cut, from what is now called the Shingle, and was much used in the old buildings of the town, has frequently been mentioned in these pages, and it may be recollected that in Churchyard's day the theatre was there. The land is about twenty acres in extent, and was formerly waste, and in it the people used, as we have said before, 'to bayt both bull and beare.' The old name for it in days gone by was 'Behind the Walles,' as opposed to the 'Maryvance,' or the space within or before Cavent by the Wales; a word which still remains in use, and which I saw set up in bold letters on a new board—very much out of character—when I was last in Shrewsbury, the autumn of 1865.

The lower walk on the Severn's side is between 500 and 550 yards long, and three avenues of lime-trees pass down to it, one in the middle and one on either side of the meadow. The regularity and the grace of these walks are pleasantly broken by the horse-chesnuts and other trees in the Dingle. On the town side is the new church of St. Chad's, on the opposite side the Home of Industry, to which the boat-ferry gives life, especially on a summer's evening, when so many of the people pass over to Kingsland.

These three walks were planted this year for Mr. Jenks by Mr. Wright, the well-known nurseryman of those days, who lived at Bicton, and gave his name to the Wright's Codling, a well-known county apple in those days and long after. The cost was 65*l.* 13*s.* The meadow appears to have been first railed in as early as 1670, when Rowhil, or Rorishal, was enclosed, which part of the town must have been then a 'wyg,' or field, as in 1719, the year when the Quarry was planted, we find it leased for ninety-nine years to Mr. John Thornton, who sowed it with rye-grass and clover. No doubt it included what is now the Cattle Market, through

which of late years a convenient road has been opened into Mardol.

Till very recent days the Lodge on the right hand side as you enter the middle walk was the marvel of all schoolboys, it being the receptacle for the water-pipes by which the town was first supplied. In 1812 an old man of the name of Wood, a very strange being, had the management of them, and used occasionally to show to Mr. Case's boys, who were allowed to play there, within certain limits, which, I very well recollect, did not comprehend the Dingle, because we used to steal away there when we could and fish for 'askers,' the provincial, and indeed the old English, name for the water-newt.

The following account is extracted from Phillips, and could not very well be omitted here, because the waste water that trickled down from Brodwell found its way into the Shrewsbury road, some quarter of a mile below where the turnpike now stands, and those who passed and repassed from Shrewsbury to Hanwood or Meole knew very well where the heads of the bright spring were. It may also be noted that the leaden pipes (better than any that are made now) were from the lead-mines further up the valley at Snail-beach.

'The Corporation,' says the old historian, 'in the year 1569, leased the Quarry to three persons for ten years at a red rose yearly on condition that they should bring the water from Brodwell, near Crow Meole, as high as it would run in the town of Shrewsbury, to be brought in leaden pipes, the first 700 yards to weigh 28 lbs. each, and to be two inches and three-quarters in bore, and the rest to weigh 16 lbs. each yard, and to be one inch and a half in bore. They were to have all the lead and stone then belonging to the conduit, except the cistern on Mardol Head, and that on the Wyle Cop. By this means the water was first brought into the town. The work was completed in 1574, and then the conduits were first opened at the upper end of Shoemakers' Row (i.e. Single Butchers' Row), Mardol Head, the Apple Market (i.e. Green Market), the Sentry Wall (near the chapel in High Street), and the Wyle Cop.'

Such was the early drinkable water, and many a time, as a schoolboy, have I drunk water at every conduit, and it was as good as any water schoolboys ever drank, who confessedly, as a rule, like something better when they can get it. Sir John Davies says in his 'Immortality of the Soul'—

> Water in conduit-pipes can run no higher
> Than the well-head from whence it first doth spring ;

but every boy in the sixth form was better acquainted with his Horace, and was ready to say in a trice, and with more humour than irregularity—

> Prisco si credis, Mæcenas docte, Cratino,
> Nulla placere diu nec vivere carmina possunt
> Quæ scribuntur aquæ potoribus—

totally regardless of the rest of that clever epistle, every word of which he knew perfectly well, and could have repeated if dear old Bishop Butler had asked him to do so ; but he liked the real ingenuous fun of a boy, and would never, for an instant, have thought to commit such a *bêtise*.

In the year following—that is, in 1720—the South Sea Bubble burst, which Lord Cowper had compared to the Trojan horse, 'ushered in with great pomp and acclamation, but contrived for treachery and destruction.' But, as hinted at before, little or nothing was known of it in the Valley of the Rea, whose shallows sparkled rather with the spotted trouts and the opal-coloured minnows as they spawned than with gold, though, as it transpired afterwards, many of the county families were sufferers. When the 100*l*. shares ran up from 130*l*. to 1,000*l*. (at which price Walpole sold out to his entire satisfaction, though his wife still dabbled a little on her own account), who might not have succumbed to the 'auri sacra fames' as before some railway king of still more recent days? And yet, methinks, it was a prettier custom of the Great Mogul of old times to weigh himself against gold and give it to the poor.

Perhaps an author of the late Mr. Buckle's speculative tendency might allege that such periodical speculations as this or the Darien schemes might be reduced to a rule. Perchance they might, for there is a money method in such mad-

ness. One thing is certain ; the example of this speculative and avaricious madness was set us from Paris, and in truth Paris fashions, as in dress, have from earlier days than these often had the predominance. The reader of Shakespeare will not forget the following passage in 'Henry VIII.'—

Lord Chamberlain. How now !
What news, Sir Thomas Lovell ?
Lovell. 'Faith, my lord,
I hear of none, but the new proclamation
That's clapp'd upon the court-gate.
Lord Chamberlain. What is't for ?
Lovell. The reformation of our travell'd gallants,
That fill the courts with quarrels, talk, and tailors.
Lord Chamberlain. I'm glad 'tis there : now I would pray our monsieurs
To think an English courtier may be wise,
And never see the Louvre.

It was a pithy saying of the Duchess of Ormond to Swift on this matter. 'You remember when the South Sea was said to be Lord Oxford's brat. Now the King has adopted it and calls it his beloved child ; though perhaps you may say if he loves it no better than his son it may not be saying much.' He who reads these pathetic lines would never wish to read Swift's 'Satirical Elegy' :

His Grace ! Impossible ! What, dead !
Vol. ii. 624. *Ed. Roscoe.*

It was early in September that the South Sea Stock began to decline, and it was the panic which resulted that brought the King back from Hanover on November 9. It was with reference to the Young Pretender that Lord Chesterfield said in bitter sarcasm, as quoted by Horace Walpole in a letter to Sir H. Mann December 9, 1742 : 'If we have a mind effectually to prevent the Pretender from ever obtaining this crown we should make him Elector of Hanover, for the people of England will never fetch another king from thence,' thus exemplifying the saying, 'Go to Hanover.'

James Craggs, Secretary of State, died of small-pox February 16, 1721, and was thought to have been deeply implicated in the South Sea Bubble. Pope, however, could

not have thought so when he wrote the lines which begin thus :—

> A soul as full of worth as void of pride,
> Which nothing seeks to show or needs to hide ;
> Which not to guilt nor fear its caution owes,
> And boasts a worth that from no passion flows.

Of the year 1722 my Talking Friend could tell me little. He seemed, however, to recollect that early in that year there was an election, which in those days was sure to gain a holiday or two for the people. Elections, to say the truth, have always been a sort of safety-valve in more ways than one. He added that, during the long days of summer this year the country people went to Kingsland to see the manœuvres of a regiment of foot there under Brigadier Stanwix.

As a soldier's name is here mentioned it should be stated that the great Duke of Marlborough died this year on June 16, not quite two months after the death of his father-in-law, the well-known Lord Sunderland. What relates to Marlborough has been said before, described by Lord Mahon, 'great in council as in arms ; not always righteous in his ends, but ever mighty in his means.' The Duke of Somerset and Lord Coningsby both sued for the hand of his widow, but she spoke out like a woman as she was when she said 'that if she were only thirty, instead of sixty, she would not allow even the Emperor of the World to succeed in that heart which had been devoted to John, Duke of Marlborough.' It is Jean Ingelow that said so well, and with such simple pathos :—

> The living do not rule the world. Ah, no!
> It is the dead ! the dead !

It was in this year that James—or, as commonly called, the Old Pretender—made the insolent proposition to George I. which, amongst other unwise actions, blasted his fortunes, namely, 'that if he would deliver up to him the throne of his fathers he would take care that he should be King of Hanover'! It was something of this sort which made Swift say, 'As much as I hate the Tories I cannot but pity them for fools. Some think likewise that the Pretender ought to have a choice of two caps, a red cap or a fool's cap !'

In the winter of this year great flocks of wild geese were seen on the wing to Merton Pool, and their flight was much observed by the country people, who were quite convinced that the leader, in his turn, fell into the rear, and let the next eat the wind for his fellows—a very old notion known to the Greeks and Romans. We may compare that wild flight with a remark of Mr. Hartwig's in his 'Tropical World,' A sight of a troop of flamingoes approaching on the wing, and describing a great fiery triangle in the air, is singularly majestic.'

A great subject of discussion between the rectors of Hanwood and Pontesbury, as well as between the clergy of the old town in the year 1723, were the merits or demerits of Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester—admitted by all parties, however restless, to have been, nevertheless, one of the ruling minds of his days. And thus it came about that his 'name was known even in the valley of the Rea, as was his power also in the Lower House of Convocation. His person, his manner, his voice so eloquent, and his pen not less so, gave him influence, and it is well said, "Few men have attained a more complete mastery of the English language, and all his compositions are marked with peculiar force, eloquence, and dignity of style."' Always opposed to the House of Hanover, he was the secret correspondent of the Pretender, and as such was arrested on August 24 last preceding. Contemporary documents show that his imprisonment was harsh. Everything sent to him was closely watched and searched, even to a pigeon-pie, which made Pope say, as quoted by Lord Mahon, 'It is the first time that dead pigeons have been suspected of carrying intelligence.'

He was brought to the bar of the House of Lords on May 6, 1723, and his own defence was spoken on the 11th, and a masterly one it was. It was on the hostility displayed against their brother (who might have been the wounded stag of the herd, though he belled so well) by the whole bench of bishops that Lord Bathurst uttered his well-known bitter sarcasm: 'Turning to the bench, he exclaimed that he could hardly account for the inveterate malice some persons bore the learned and ingenious Bishop of Rochester, unless they were possessed with the infatuation of the wild Indians, who

fondly believe they will inherit not only the spoils, but even the abilities of any great enemy they kill.'

But—and one would like to say with Sir Philip Sidney, 'Fie of such a but!'—whatever may be pleaded in Atterbury's defence, there is no doubt in the present day, from papers which have come to light, that he was deeply implicated in James's favour, and one may use the words of Daniel in his 'Civil Wars'—well-languaged Daniel, whom Coleridge tutored Charles Lamb to think so highly of—

> Wherein the wit dealt wary in this case,
> Yet in the end itself it over-wrought ;
> Striving to hide, he opened it the more ;
> His after-care showed craft had gone before !

In earlier years, and under the Tudors, instead of being quietly shipped off on June 18 for Calais in a man-of-war, Atterbury's shadow would have been made evidently less, for he would have lost his head. As Sacheverel's name has occurred before in these pages, it may be noted that he died in June this year, and left Atterbury a legacy of 500*l.* Swift's satire 'Upon the Horrid Plot discovered by Harlequin, the Bishop of Rochester's French Dog, in a Dialogue between a Whig and a Tory' (1723), will be found amongst his poems. He died in exile in Paris in 1732, and Pope's 'Epitaph' is well known. Perhaps it has been too heavily censured by Dr. Johnson. His only daughter, Mrs. Morice, died in his arms, immediately after she arrived at Toulouse to see him.

Again this year the King went to Hanover, and was absent from the kingdom for six months, paying a visit on state affairs to his son-in-law, the King of Prussia, at Berlin. He returned December 18.

There had been small-pox in the vale for several years past off and on, and it may be mentioned here that inoculation is said to have been introduced into England about this time from Turkey. The great discovery of Jenner was yet far off, and it is no marvel that so many died of this dread disease when we look upon the treatment they underwent. It was somewhere about 1711, says the author of 'Court and Society from Queen Elizabeth to Anne,' that his doctors shut up poor Joseph I. in a room 'with a blazing fire, covered him with

blankets, swathed him in scarlet cloth, gave him strong spiced drinks, and pretended to wonder that he died.' This, by the by, reminds me of what Dr. George Gregory says in his work of eruptive fevers. 'What think you of a prince of the blood royal of England (John, the son of Edward the Second) being treated for small-pox by being put into a bed surrounded with red hangings, covered with red blankets and a red counterpane, gargling his throat with mulberry wine and sucking the red juice of pomegranates? Yet this was the boasted prescription of John of Gaddesden, who took no small credit to himself for bringing his royal patient safely through the disease.' However little we do know now, we know better than this.

Amongst others who suffered from this disease but recovered was a woman, by name Whitelace, to whom my Talking Friend had a particular aversion, and almost grudged her shelter when she passed his way. She was a very shrewd but a very ignorant person, with a low grade of principle, which only looked one way, and that was to her own interests. There was a poor neighbour, by name Cloots, whose money she drew upon as long as she had any, and when it was gone pretended to know very little about her. This poor woman, after frittering away on a small dairy, which Dame Whitelace superintended, a very considerable sum of money, came to poverty, and drowned herself. Before her death, when the wild fit of despair was on, she went to Dame Whitelace's and asked her to take her in as a lodger for a time, but she declined to do so. 'Probably,' said my Talking Friend, 'she *could* not do so, but under the circumstances she *might* have tried to do so. I never could abide her. Her presence was always odious to me, as the summer worm which curls my midsummer shoot, or as the click-beetle that commits inroads on my bark.'

'This woman when a girl, and in her first service almost, lived with a particular friend of the curate's of Hanwood, at the Linches, who used to tell his neighbour that she was not fond of being taught (for he always had his servants in to read a chapter before going to bed), but at the same time had a peculiar form of prayer of her own, which she never omitted to use, and when it was over at once made a plunge into bed. The house being small, the curate's friend heard

all this,' and, as far as I could make out from my Talking Friend, the prayer consisted but of these old lines :—

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed I sleep upon ;
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels round my head :
One to read, and one to write,
And two to guard me all the night.

Under such circumstances what could Dame Whitelace want with reading or book-learning? Her study was on pelf and self, and she made money ; but she never made a friend, and, as I said, was the Old Oak's particular abhorrence.

There was a great deal of mist throughout the valley of the Rea all last year and all this, and it was said to be the cause of much sickness. But in hot, muggy seasons it is common enough, and any observant person in an evening may trace the meanderings of the stream by this 'cynd, or water-smoke,' as it would be called in Norfolk, for miles. Of late years I have never heard that it produced agues or fever of any sort. As a whole, the Valley of the Rea has always been a healthy one for long years, and it is not the water-smoke, but the manufactory smoke and 'chemics,' and the coal-pit smoke, that disfigure it now. Till these abominations defiled it, no valley in the nation surpassed its quiet beauty, and Goldsmith would have loved it with all his heart and soul. Such lines as these,which begin the 'Deserted Village,' always have pleased and always will :

Sweet Auburn ! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the lab'ring swain,
Where smiling Spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting Summer's ling'ring blooms delayed :
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please :
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !

One other local circumstance attaches to this year, which I quote in the words of our historian : '1723, Sept. 4.—Robert and William B — were executed for the murder of William Matthews and Walter Whitcomb at Beslow, June 19. They were hung in chains on the south side of the London

Road, a little beyond the seventh milestone, where the writer of this remembers the gibbet in 1775.'

How it came to be mentioned under the Old Oak was thus: John Aston, a collier, who lived at Arlocott, had been down to the Low Countries—as Ketley and that neighbourhood were then called—for work. He returned in the dusk of the evening—one summer's evening of the next year—and as he passed he heard the chains clanking in the wind, and was frightened out of his wits. He often told his neighbours that he should never pass that way again by night. It made a deep impression upon him, as he told the curate at Longden, and John Aston was not a man who hereafter could laugh at

> Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
> Nocturnos lemures, &c.

In the year 1724 I find no local occurrences to mention, and my Talking Friend could only report what he heard from the passers-by, more particularly from the Curate of Hanwood, for the Rector, who was in those days the Rev. John Cotton, seldom resided there, but lived at Brace Meole.

But although no local occurrence came to the Old Oak's memory he mentioned a circumstance which is connected with the history of the time and caused a great commotion in Ireland. One Thomas Janvric, who had lived for some time at Cruck Meole, came to visit a kinsman, who for the time being was settled at Little Hanwood, and he brought with him a score at least of some new halfpence from Ireland, where he said they were now circulated to the great annoyance of the people.

The reader will at once call to mind that they must have been of William Wood's new coinage for Ireland, touching which Swift wrote to his Excellency Lord Carteret, the Lord Lieutenant, saying, 'You will find that there is not one person of any rank or party in the whole kingdom who does not look upon Wood's patent as the most ruinous project that was ever contrived against any nation.' In the Valley in general this was a matter of no concern, no more than the Birmingham pence and halfpence in a later reign; the views of the people here were rather set upon the lead ore which

might be got out of the bowels of the earth at Snailbeach. But the subject is just touched upon here, as this coinage was the origin of Swift's celebrated Drapier's 'Letters,' which were the cause of his undying popularity in Ireland. What Lord Mahon says of him is quite and certainly true.

Believing, however erroneously, that Swift had delivered them from a great public danger, their gratitude to him knew no bounds, nor ended even with his powers of mind. 'The sun of his popularity,' says a great poet (Scott, in his 'Life of Swift') 'remained unclouded even after he was incapable of distinguishing its radiance. The Drapier's Head became a favourite sign; his portrait, we are told, was engraved, woven upon handkerchiefs, and struck upon medals (not of copper, I presume). His health was quaffed at every banquet, his presence everywhere welcomed with blessings by the people. They bore with all the infirmities of genius, all the peevishness of age. In vain did he show contempt and aversion to those who thus revered him; in vain did he deny them even the honour of his birth-place, frequently saying, "I was not dropped in this vile country, but in England." In vain did he sneer at "the savage old Irish." No insult on his part could weaken their generous attachment. Even at this day, as I am assured, this grateful feeling still survives, and all parties in Ireland, however estranged on other questions, agree in one common veneration for the memory of SWIFT.'

I now began readily to perceive that it was with my Talking Friend, as with people far advanced in years. He could recollect what had passed long ago far better than he recollected what had passed more recently. Certainly about the date we are now dwelling upon he recollected very little indeed.

A wayfaring man, whom he called Harry Smout, chanced one day to have been at Buildwas, and on his return to Westbury rested him beneath his boughs. The mention of Buildwas excited him, and he spoke something of what he had heard about Wenlock and Haughmond Abbeys going to decay, adding plaintively—for he thought it a contumely in a Christian country—'They had not outlived many oaks.'

In the next year my Talking Friend said there was much

disputation in Shrewsbury about the assizes, and it was a subject of conversation and regret at Cruckton, Cruck Meole, and Hanwood, as the old houses were interested parties. It is thus mentioned by our historian: '1727, April 10.—Whereas the several guilds and innkeepers have withdrawn their contributions towards entertaining the judges. Agreed, that, for the future the Corporation expend no more money on that account.' To which is added: 'The Judges of Assizes were refused the usual compliments by the Mayor. Upon which account the next Assizes were held at Bridgenorth. This had long been a point much contested between the Judges and the Corporation, and the dispute was not settled as late as 1738, when the Assizes were held at Bridgenorth; but it is believed that this was the last time.'

An earthquake is said to have been felt in the neighbourhood this year, but the Old Oak's roots were too deeply seated to be moved by it.

Meanwhile the days of George I. were drawing to a close. Early in June he started for Hanover, never to return. On his way thither, and before reaching Ippenburen, he was suddenly seized with an apoplectic attack. His last words were, 'Osnabruck! Osnabruck!' the name of his brother's (the Prince-Bishop's) palace, which he wished in vain to reach. He died on June 11. 'What postilion,' asks Thackeray, 'can outstride that pale horseman—DEATH?' 'And thus suddenly closed his chequered and eventful, but on the whole prosperous, constitutional, and indulgent reign.' So says Lord Mahon. And whether at home or abroad, Death is sure to find us! But whether is the better, a place amid the sepulchres of the kings, or some lonely spot among the mountains, or such a sweet retired churchyard as that of Hanwood, where the evergreen yew is an emblem of the Resurrection, my Talking Friend would not say.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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